

EASTER: PEOPLE

BIBLE VERSE

But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

(John 20:31)

BIBLE STORY REFERENCE

John 20

PowerXpress!® Bible Experience Stations®

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MAIN IDEA

The lives of Jesus' friends were changed on the day of resurrection. Our lives are changed as we become Easter people through God's grace.

OBJECTIVES

Children will

- * learn the Easter story as it is found in John's Gospel;
- * identify ways that people changed because of the Resurrection;
- * recognize that we can also experience change through God's grace.

FOR ALL YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Photocopy these sections for all your leaders:

- * Main Idea; Objectives (page 3)
- * Bible Story (page 4)
- * Bible Background for Leaders (pages 4-5)
- * About the Children (page 6)
- * Shepherd Tips (pages 6-7)
- * Check Your Facts (page 7)

BIBLE STORY

Summary: John 20

John 20 tells the story of Jesus' Resurrection. Mary Magdalene first discovers the empty tomb and tells Peter and another disciple. Mary then sees the risen Christ and speaks with him. Later that day Christ appears to the other disciples. Thomas, however, is not there and does not believe his friends when they tell him Christ is risen. A week later Jesus appears to Thomas and gives him physical proof of his death and Resurrection. John ends the chapter by stating his purpose in writing his Gospel: to tell all people that Jesus is the Son of God so they too can believe.

BIBLE BACKGROUND for Leaders

In all four Gospels the story of the Resurrection begins with women going to Jesus' tomb. John's Gospel, however, tells only of Mary Magdalene going to the tomb (John 20:1). She was the first person Jesus spoke to after his resurrection and the first person to tell the disciples Jesus was alive (John 20:18).

Mary Magdalene is the only woman named in all four Gospels as witnessing Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. She came from Magdala, a town located on the Sea of Galilee, just north of Tiberius. She is assumed to have been a woman of some wealth, for she and several others are named in Luke as being able to provide for Jesus and the apostles "out of their resources" (Luke 8:3).

When Mary Magdalene discovered the tomb with the stone rolled away from the entrance, she immediately ran for Peter and "the other disciple" (John 20:2). She did not enter the tomb. Mary assumed Jesus' tomb had been robbed and the body stolen. After all, many people disliked Jesus and his disciples, and they could have defiled his tomb.

Bible-times people did not bury the dead like we do today. Poor people were buried in unmarked, shallow graves. Richer individuals were interred in caves or tombs cut from rock located outside the city walls. After death, friends or family members applied a mixture of spices to the body, either as a preservative or to ward off the smell of decomposition. The body was then dressed in its own clothes or wrapped in a linen shroud. It was the custom for mourners to visit the tomb for thirty days. The cave or tomb was sealed with square slabs of stone or with a rolling stone.

Jesus was placed in a borrowed tomb offered by Joseph of Arimathea. Normal burial customs were not followed because it was almost the

sabbath. Jewish law required that a person who was executed was to be buried on the day of death so the land would not be defiled (Deuteronomy 21:22-23). The Romans sealed and guarded the tomb.

When Peter and the other disciple arrived at the tomb, only Peter entered, going immediately into the tomb (John 20:6). Already Peter was showing himself as the leader he would be in the future church. Biblical scholars are unsure who the “other disciple” was. Some believe that it was John, the writer of the Gospel, himself. Other writers feel it is unlikely that the writer of the Gospel would give himself such a flattering title.

The cloths that had wrapped Jesus’ body remained, but Jesus was gone. The other disciple “saw and believed” when he entered the tomb and saw the cloths (John 20:8). Peter and the other disciple left, but Mary remained at the tomb crying.

Mary looked into the tomb and saw something the disciples didn’t—“two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying” (John 20:12). They questioned her and, after she responded, she turned around and saw Jesus. At first she did not recognize him, but when he spoke to her, she realized who he was. She tried to touch him but could not—their relationship had changed. She then left and bore witness that Christ lives.

That evening Jesus appeared to all the disciples as they were gathered behind locked doors (John 20:19). He spoke to them and showed them his wounds. Then he instructed them to forgive people’s sins (John 20:22).

Thomas did not believe what the disciples told him. He wanted proof. He got the proof he needed when Jesus appeared to him.

John ended the chapter with a message for each person who reads his words: “These are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life” (John 20:31). Jesus’ followers were changed after the resurrection. Fear changed to strength, belief, and the ability to do the work God planned for them. John’s words remind us that we too can be changed from the Resurrection.

ABOUT THE CHILDREN

Younger Children

Younger children may have a difficult time understanding what “new life in Jesus Christ” means, but they do understand the rebirth of the earth at springtime. They may be curious about death. Anticipate questions that might arise concerning Jesus’ death, but focus on the joy of the Resurrection.

Some of the children’s questions can only be answered with, “I don’t know.” Let children know that Jesus’ friends were happy when they saw him again. Focus on Easter as a happy occasion. The meaning of the Resurrection will deepen for children as they grow in faith.

Older Children

Older children have a growing sense of fairness. They enjoy stories where the “good guy” wins over the “bad guy.” They may have difficulty understanding why Jesus suffered on the cross, but they will rejoice in the triumph of the Resurrection.

Older children are leaving the concrete realism of early childhood and are beginning the questioning of adolescence. Some children will accept the miracle of the Resurrection without question. Others will question how it could be. Be open and honest with your answers. Accept the children in whatever they understand and believe. If you cannot answer a question, tell them you will help them find an answer, and then do so. Leaders in your church are all good sources of support.

SHEPHERD TIPS

- * Pray each week for the children under your care.
- * Model the behavior you want from the children.
- * Assist the station leader as needed.
- * Make sure the children use tools and equipment in a safe manner.
- * Talk to the church school superintendent or coordinator if you have any questions or concerns about the children in your care.
- * If you do not have a Gathering Time, consider using the Gathering Time devotionals as an opening with your groups in the stations.

Greet the Children

Help with nametags.

Thank the children for remembering to bring their offerings. Have the children place their offerings in the offering basket.

Take attendance. Note any children who are absent. Make plans to send absent children a note or card. Record names, addresses, and

phone numbers of any children who are attending for the first time, and plan to call them or to send a welcoming card.

Read the **Talk Tips** in each of the station plans and support the station leader in helping the children explore the ideas of the unit.

Journals

The children will record their discoveries in journals at the end of each station. You will need to take time in the Gathering or another early activity to help them make journals. Journals can be folders or paper stapled together (with a construction paper cover).

CHECK YOUR FACTS

- ☐ The story of the Resurrection is found in all four Gospels.
- ☐ Mary Magdalene discovered the stone rolled from the tomb on Sunday morning, the day after Passover ended.
- ☐ Mary Magdalene is the only woman named in all four Gospels as being part of Christ's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.
- ☐ Mary ran to tell Peter and another disciple; they followed her back to the tomb.
- ☐ Peter entered the tomb to find only the cloths that had wrapped Jesus' body.
- ☐ Peter and the other disciple left and went back to the city.
- ☐ Mary remained at the tomb, crying.
- ☐ Mary then looked in the tomb and saw two angels sitting where Jesus' body had originally been placed.
- ☐ Mary Magdalene then spoke to a man she believed to be a gardener.
- ☐ Mary realized it was Jesus when the "gardener" spoke to her.
- ☐ Jesus encountered the disciples the evening of that same day.
- ☐ Thomas was not with the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them.
- ☐ Thomas did not believe that Jesus was alive.
- ☐ Jesus appeared to Thomas and invited the man to touch his wounds.
- ☐ John ended the Gospel by telling readers his purpose was to help people have faith in Christ.

Resources

Bible
hymnal
*The Tale of Three
Trees*, retold by
Angela Elwell
Hunt

Supplies

paper
pencils
pens

STAFF MEETING

Focus Scripture: John 3:16

Focus Hymn: “Lord of the Dance”

Focus Book: *The Tale of Three Trees*

Read John 3:16.

Discuss

What memories do you have around this Scripture?

What does this Scripture say to you?

Sing “Lord of the Dance” or read the words.

Discuss (in groups of two or three)

How does this song help you reflect on the Easter story?

List at least ten different ways you might use this song to teach the Easter story.

Ask a volunteer to read *The Tale of Three Trees*. (Option: Show the video as indicated in the Video Station.)

Distribute paper and pencils.

Ask persons to quietly reflect and record their answers to these questions:

What do you believe about Jesus?

Why do you believe this?

How have your beliefs changed you?

How can you best minister as an Easter person to the children in your care?

Discuss

Journaling is an excellent way for children and adults to reflect on their experiences. How might you use journaling with the children? (Each station suggests children use journals in the closing activity. Journals can be as simple as paper stapled together, or as elaborate as you choose.)

The Reflection Week activities invite the children to take the pages they wrote in each session and create a keepsake “Easter People Journal.”

REFLECTION WEEK

These activities are designed to be done in small groups, either by the shepherd or by a station leader with a group. The purpose is to help the children pull together the parts of the Easter unit and find meaning in this unit for their own lives. Play the songs on the CD in the background as you do the activities.

Prepare

Display art work or projects the children completed during the rotation session.

Hang Resurrection pictures from old curriculum.

Bible Story

(10 minutes)

Ask the children to tell the story of Jesus' resurrection in their own words.

Ask a volunteer to read John 20:31. Ask the children to repeat the verse.

Easter Story Eggs

Have the children take turns holding and opening the egg. Ask them to tell the significance of the contents in the egg.

Work together to arrange the eggs in order.

Easter Symbol Matching Game

Prepare

Copy the Easter symbols from the book *Symbols of Faith*, and cut them so that they fit inside egg carton spaces. Place one set of symbols on one side of the egg carton, and another set on the other side. Create several game sets as needed for the size of your class.

Invite the children to work in pairs to play the matching game. Each child turns over a symbol on one side of the carton, then tries to find its match on the other side. If they match, the child keeps the two cards. If they don't, the child turns both cards over. Continue playing until all cards have been matched.

Resources

Bibles

Supplies

Easter eggs with symbols (from Gathering Time, pages 12-13)

Resources

Easter symbols
(from Game Station, page 45)

Supplies

empty egg carton
scissors

Supplies

construction paper
staplers
hole punches
ribbon
string
yarn
journal pages
children wrote
during session
closings
pencils/pens
paper
markers/crayons

Resources

* **Easter People**
CD

Supplies

CD Player

Easter People Journals

Say: During the last few weeks, you began a journal about the things you learned and the things you thought about the Easter story. Today you will finish the journal by adding some final thoughts and creating a cover for it.

Ask: What was your favorite activity during this unit? Why?
What was your favorite station? Why?
What was one new thing you learned during this unit?

Allow time for the children to think about the questions. Then ask them to write paragraphs or draw pictures to answer the questions.

Set out materials for journal covers. The children can decorate the construction paper with markers and crayons as desired to create front and back covers. When finished, they will fasten the journals. They can use staples or they can punch holes in the pages and fasten them together with ribbon, string, or yarn.

Music Time

Ask the children to select songs they enjoyed. Sing the songs together, adding body rhythms and movements where possible.

Closing

Sit together in a circle. Ask each person to take and slowly release three deep breaths.

Ask: How has this unit helped you be an Easter person?
How could you help someone else be an Easter person?

Introduce the next unit.

Pray: Dear God, thank you for the gift of Jesus. Thank you for helping us become Easter people. Be with us as we tell others about Jesus so they, too, can become Easter people. Amen.

STATIONS AT A GLANCE

Stations	Focus	Preferences	Activities
Art Children will learn the Bible story through art experiences.	Station Focus: The lives of Jesus' friends were changed on the day of resurrection. Our lives are changed as we become Easter people through God's grace. Mission Project: The Teddy Bear Project	Learning preference: Physical Social Visual Logical Verbal	Expressions of Change Making Things New Teddy Bear Project Easter Greetings Card Pinch Pot Tomb Transformation Collage
Computer Children will learn the Bible story through computer experiences.	Station Focus: The lives of Jesus' friends were changed on the day of resurrection. Our lives are changed as we become Easter people through God's grace.	Learning preference: Logical Verbal Visual Independent	Play & Learn Pathways Through Jerusalem iLumina Tell the Story Graffiti Board
Cooking Children will learn the Bible story through experiences with food preparation.	Station Focus: The lives of Jesus' friends were changed on the day of resurrection. Our lives are changed as we become Easter people through God's grace.	Learning preference: Visual Physical Social Logical Verbal	Lemonade Surprise Easter Bread Crosses Fancy Egg Bread Cinnamon Angels Pita Pocket Messages Eggstra Special Sandwiches New Life Eggs
Game Children will play a series of learning games.	Station Focus: The lives of Jesus' friends were changed on the day of resurrection. Our lives are changed as we become Easter people through God's grace.	Learning preference: Verbal Social Visual Physical Logical	Tell the Good News Jesus Is Alive! Two Truths and a Fib Stand and Switch I Believe, I Doubt New Christian Cheerleading Association Fearless Leader What Changed?
Music Children will learn the Bible story through musical experiences.	Station Focus: The lives of Jesus' friends were changed on the day of resurrection. Our lives are changed as we become Easter people through God's grace.	Learning preference: Musical Logical Verbal Social Independent	Handel's Hallelujah Handel's Messiah Hallelujah! Hymn of Promise The Sounds of Easter Sing "He Is Risen" Heleluyan Faith Is Believing
Science Children will learn the Bible story through science experiences.	Station Focus: The lives of Jesus' friends were changed on the day of resurrection. Our lives are changed as we become Easter people through God's grace.	Learning preference: Social Logical Visual Verbal	Tomb Garden Crystal Ink Cabbage Change Shake Picture Seeing Is Believing New Life We'll Never Be Lost Step Through Paper
Storytelling Children will remember the Bible story as they hear new stories.	Station Focus: The lives of Jesus' friends were changed on the day of resurrection. Our lives are changed as we become Easter people through God's grace.	Learning preference: Verbal Visual Social Independent	Easter Emotions Do You Believe? A Jerusalem Well A Story of Thomas Face Sculpture Peter's Walk Become the Story
Video Children will remember the Bible story as they hear and see videos.	Station Focus: The lives of Jesus' friends were changed on the day of resurrection. Our lives are changed as we become Easter people through God's grace.	Learning preference: Visual Independent Social Verbal	Return of the King The Greatest Adventure The Three Trees Belief, Faith, and Change Select Your Own Video

Resources		Plan-Ahead Supplies	
Bibles	<input type="checkbox"/> modeling dough or clay <input type="checkbox"/> cardboard <input type="checkbox"/> paint <input type="checkbox"/> paintbrushes <input type="checkbox"/> boxes <input type="checkbox"/> discarded objects <input type="checkbox"/> wood scraps <input type="checkbox"/> silver duct tape	<input type="checkbox"/> hand tools <input type="checkbox"/> markers <input type="checkbox"/> newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> mirror <input type="checkbox"/> smocks <input type="checkbox"/> construction paper <input type="checkbox"/> pencils <input type="checkbox"/> scissors	<input type="checkbox"/> crayons <input type="checkbox"/> bowl of water <input type="checkbox"/> rulers <input type="checkbox"/> glue <input type="checkbox"/> glitter
Bibles <i>The Play & Learn Children's Bible</i> CD-ROM <i>Pathways Through Jerusalem</i> CD-ROM <i>iLumina Bible Software</i> CD-ROM <i>Kid Pix Deluxe 4</i> CD-ROM or <i>PowerPoint</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> computer <input type="checkbox"/> printer <input type="checkbox"/> paper <input type="checkbox"/> digital camera <input type="checkbox"/> Bible-times costumes <input type="checkbox"/> pens/pencils		
Bibles	<input type="checkbox"/> ingredients for recipes (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> utensils for recipes (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> plastic sandwich bags <input type="checkbox"/> paper cups <input type="checkbox"/> plastic wrap	<input type="checkbox"/> small bowls <input type="checkbox"/> wax paper <input type="checkbox"/> plastic knives <input type="checkbox"/> paper towels <input type="checkbox"/> aluminum foil <input type="checkbox"/> paper <input type="checkbox"/> pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> scissors <input type="checkbox"/> markers <input type="checkbox"/> egg-shaped cookie cutters <input type="checkbox"/> tray <input type="checkbox"/> plastic spoons <input type="checkbox"/> plastic forks
Bibles <i>Symbols of Faith</i> , by Marcia Joslyn Stoner	<input type="checkbox"/> watch or clock with second hand <input type="checkbox"/> plastic pull-apart eggs <input type="checkbox"/> paper <input type="checkbox"/> markers <input type="checkbox"/> blindfolds <input type="checkbox"/> Easter symbols	<input type="checkbox"/> towel <input type="checkbox"/> tray	
Bibles <i>Easter: People</i> CD <i>Easter: People</i> lyric sheets <i>Easter: People</i> sheet music <i>The Messiah</i> by Handel	<input type="checkbox"/> CD player <input type="checkbox"/> map or globe <input type="checkbox"/> empty film canisters <input type="checkbox"/> mural paper <input type="checkbox"/> markers/crayons <input type="checkbox"/> television/VCR <input type="checkbox"/> rhythm instruments	<input type="checkbox"/> drums <input type="checkbox"/> bells or tambourines <input type="checkbox"/> optional: audio recording device <input type="checkbox"/> optional: empty film canisters or potato chip cans, paper clips or plastic beads	
Bibles	<input type="checkbox"/> salt <input type="checkbox"/> water <input type="checkbox"/> paper cup <input type="checkbox"/> paintbrush <input type="checkbox"/> construction paper <input type="checkbox"/> fresh red cabbage	<input type="checkbox"/> knife <input type="checkbox"/> strainer <input type="checkbox"/> vinegar <input type="checkbox"/> tempera paint <input type="checkbox"/> jars with lids <input type="checkbox"/> carrot tops	<input type="checkbox"/> sweet potatoes <input type="checkbox"/> grass seed <input type="checkbox"/> glass jars <input type="checkbox"/> potting soil <input type="checkbox"/> compasses <input type="checkbox"/> stone <input type="checkbox"/> gravel, twigs, grass seed, ivy, flowering plants, potting compost <input type="checkbox"/> old stocking <input type="checkbox"/> tray, flowerpot
Bibles	<input type="checkbox"/> washable markers <input type="checkbox"/> newsprint <input type="checkbox"/> heavy-duty aluminum foil <input type="checkbox"/> construction paper	<input type="checkbox"/> stapler <input type="checkbox"/> basket <input type="checkbox"/> bread <input type="checkbox"/> rock <input type="checkbox"/> towel	<input type="checkbox"/> water <input type="checkbox"/> hammer <input type="checkbox"/> board <input type="checkbox"/> optional: blindfolds <input type="checkbox"/> pencils
Bibles <i>Kingdom Under the Sea: Return of the King</i> <i>The Greatest Adventure: The Easter Story</i> <i>The Legend of the Three Trees</i> <i>Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade</i> <i>Field of Dreams</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> DVD player <input type="checkbox"/> television or computer <input type="checkbox"/> optional: VCR and television		

RESOURCES

These resources
may be ordered through
Cokesbury (800-672-1789)
and other Christian bookstores
or online through
www.cokesbury.com
(unless noted otherwise).

Computer Resources

- ❑ **The Play & Learn Children's Bible** CD-ROM. \$15.00. Order from www.sundaysoftware.com.
- ❑ 9781414339320 **iLumina Bible Software**, Tyndale House, \$19.99, or **iLumina Gold Premium**.
- ❑ X514718 **Pathways Through Jerusalem** CD-ROM. \$40.00.
- ❑ 705381321798 **Kid Pix Deluxe 4** CD-ROM. \$25.00.

Music Resources

- ❑ **Easter: People** music (Compact disc, 9780687094820, \$10.50).
- ❑ **Easter: People** sheet music.
- ❑ **Easter: People** lyric sheets.
- ❑ **The Messiah** by Handel. (Check your church library.)

Storytelling Resources

- ❑ 9780745917436 **The Tale of Three Trees**, retold by Angela Elwell Hunt. \$14.99.
- ❑ 9780687094752 **Symbols of Faith**, by Marcia Joslyn Stoner. \$18.00.

Video Resources

- ❑ 1595360298 **The Greatest Adventure: The Easter Story** DVD. Hanna-Barbera, \$7.98. Order from NestEntertainment.com.
- ❑ 9781563717253 **Kingdom Under the Sea: Return of the King** DVD. \$7.95.
- ❑ **Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade** DVD (available at video-rental stores or public libraries).
- ❑ 978559731148 **Field of Dreams** DVD. \$12.98.
- ❑ 9780849959431 **The Legend of the Three Trees** DVD, narrated by Hal Holbrook. \$9.99.

Resources are constantly changing and going out of print. Websites are also constantly changing. Although all websites we suggest were checked at the time this unit was developed, we urge you to check each site to verify that it is still live and that it is still appropriate for children before using it in an activity.

Go to **www.powerxpress.com** for any updated information and alternative activities.

Prices subject to change without notice.