

# STORYTELLING STATION

## STATION FOCUS

The tomb where Jesus was buried was found empty.  
Jesus is alive!

## SCRIPTURES

Luke 23:50–24:12

## STATION OBJECTIVES

Children will have the opportunity to

- \* hear the Easter story as it is told in the Gospel of Luke;
- \* hear the story of the empty tomb in a variety of ways;
- \* explore the wonderful surprise of Easter;
- \* learn that they can make a difference in God's world.

## STATION SETUP

Around the room, display Easter storybooks from your church library or the books you will be using during the station.

Set up the Storytelling Station in the space where you have your Gathering Time. See page 11 for details about how to set up that garden space.

Be sure that each leader and shepherd has a copy of the Main Idea, Objectives, Bible Story, Bible Background, Check Your Facts, About the Children, Shepherd Tips, and Mission Project (pages 3–7). These photocopies may have been handed out at the Staff Meeting.

## Resources

pages 3–7  
books to be used in  
this station or other  
Easter storybooks

### Supplies

Bible-times costumes  
shepherd crooks,  
baskets, and other  
Bible-times props

### Resources

children's Bible or a  
storybook that tells  
the Easter story from  
the Book of Luke

### Supplies

posterboard  
scissors  
aluminum foil  
large rubber bands  
or cloth ties  
chairs  
sheets  
old shirts or pieces  
of material for  
costumes

### Note

Resources and  
websites are constantly  
changing. Check  
[www.powerxpress.com](http://www.powerxpress.com)  
for updates that may  
help you in planning.

# WANT TO DO MORE?

Hang the Bible-times costumes that you use for your Christmas plays around the room. Add shepherd crooks, baskets, and other props that help the children imagine Bible times.

# SAFETY CHECK

- The church should be a place of security—a place where children can count on things and people being reliable.
- Each shepherd should know the whereabouts of every child in his or her group and where to reach a parent in case of an emergency.
- Make sure the room is large enough for the activities selected, with furniture safely pushed out of the way for drama activities.
- Create a safe environment in which children feel able to share or not share during discussions.

# BIBLE STORY (5–10 minutes)

## Prepare

Cut two pairs of angel wings and several swords from posterboard. Cover them with foil. Provide large rubber bands or cloth ties to attach the angel wings to children.

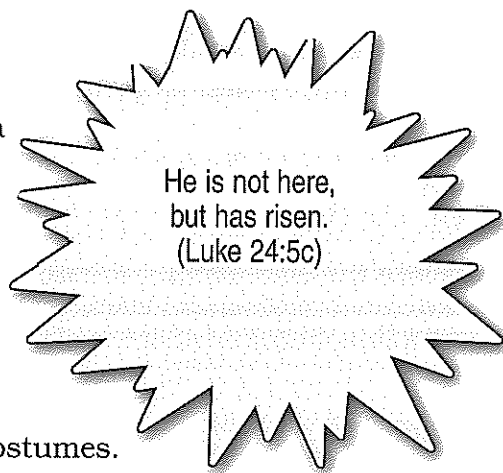
## With the Children

If you are not in the Gathering area with the tent tomb (see page 11), have the children make a tomb by covering a circle of chairs with sheets. One of the chairs can be covered with a neutral-color sheet and serve as the stone covering the entrance to the tomb.

Use shirts and pieces of cloth for costumes.

Have the children act out the account of Easter morning as you read aloud from a children's Bible or an Easter storybook that tells the Bible story from the Book of Luke.

Allow the children to take turns playing the different roles in the story.



# ACTIVITY OPTIONS

(45–50 minutes)

Choose from the following activities those that are appropriate for the age level of the children as your time, space, and resources allow.



For All Ages

# Weave an Easter Story

**Ask:** What are your favorite colors? Why do you like these colors?  
How does each of these colors make you feel?

**Say:** Let's look at some colors that can help us remember the story of Easter and the empty tomb.

Hold up a different color of ribbon as you talk about each of these parts of the Easter story:

<i>black:</i> for sadness	<i>purple:</i> for the women
<i>beige:</i> for the stone	<i>yellow:</i> for happiness or joy
<i>orange:</i> for the sunrise	<i>white:</i> for good news

Give each child six ribbons, one of each color, and a berry basket. Ask the children to weave the ribbons into their berry baskets as you read "The Story of Philip" (page 77).

**Ask:** How was Philip's story a surprise? Who knew the real meaning of Easter in this story? What is the true meaning of Easter?

Give each child an empty plastic egg to put in his or her basket as a reminder of the happy news of Easter that the tomb was empty and that Jesus is alive.

For All Ages

# Hatching Eggs

## Prepare

Print each word from Luke 24:5c—"He is not here, but has risen"—on a separate slip of paper. Place all the slips of paper into one plastic egg. Put the egg with the Bible verse into an Easter basket along with enough empty plastic eggs so that each child will have one egg from the basket.

Begin playing the songs from the *The Empty Tomb* CD as the children gather.

## With the Children

As the children sit in a circle, hand the full Easter basket to one child.

**Say:** As the music plays, pass the basket around the circle so that each person can take one egg.

After everyone has an egg ask the children to open their eggs. They will find that only one has a message in it. Have the child who has the egg with the Bible verse put the words in order to read the Bible verse aloud. (Others can help put the words in order if that works with your group.)

## Resources

"The Story of Philip"  
(page 77)

## Supplies

12-inch lengths of  
ribbon in 6 colors  
for each child  
small plastic berry  
baskets, one per  
child  
empty plastic eggs

## Resources

Bible  
\* *The Empty Tomb*  
CD  
"The Story of Philip"  
(page 77)

## Supplies

slips of paper  
marker  
plastic eggs, one for  
each child  
Easter basket  
CD player



**Ask:** How did you feel when you found that your egg was empty? (Accept answers.) How did it feel to have the “special egg,” the one with the message?

**Say:** Let’s listen to a story about a boy named Philip to think more about what the eggs we have tell us about Easter.

Read “The Story of Philip” (page 77).

**Ask:** Which one of you has the special egg? (The answer should be “we all do.”)

**Say:** That’s right! The empty eggs are like the empty tomb. Jesus is gone, he is not there. He is alive! He is with us everywhere! That makes the empty eggs special eggs because they have the same message as the one egg that contained the words the women heard when they found the tomb empty.

**Close With Prayer:** Thank you, God, for the empty tomb that reminds us that Jesus is alive and that we have a special new life with God too.

### For All Ages

## Easter Story Magnets

Give each child a sheet of drawing paper and access to a variety of colored pencils, crayons, and markers. Ask each one to draw a picture to illustrate a scene from the Easter story.

When the pages are ready, let the children make the pictures into magnet puzzles, following these instructions:

1. Flip the paper over.
2. Trace shapes of as many magnets as it takes to cover the back of the picture.
3. Cut out each of the shapes, and stick them to the sticky side of the magnets.
4. Place the completed magnet puzzle in an envelope.

Ask each child to find a partner and challenge the partner to put the magnet puzzle together on a metal object such as a cookie sheet. As the picture takes shape, the one putting the puzzle together must guess what the picture is and then tell that part of the story. Then the partners can change roles and the other child can put together a puzzle and tell a part of the story.

If time allows, the children might want to visit another class—perhaps an adult group—and tell their Easter stories using their magnet puzzles.

**Option:** If time is limited, use pages from an Easter coloring book. You can allow time for the children to color the pictures, or they can use the pictures as they are.

### Resources

optional: Easter coloring book

### Supplies

drawing paper  
colored pencils,  
crayons, and  
markers

self-stick magnets  
(such as business  
card magnets that  
are sold in bulk in  
office supply stores)

scissors  
envelopes  
several flat metal  
objects, such as  
cookie sheets

# For Younger Children

## Looking in All the Wrong Places!

### Prepare

Gather the props needed for the story "Jesus Is Alive!" (page 78) as well as story figures to represent the people in the story. You will need two men dressed in white to be the two messengers at the tomb; you may need to use white cloth to cover two figures.

Draw or cut out enough pictures of birds and fish so that each child can find at least one.

Hide the fish in high places and birds in low places all over the room. In other words, put fish in places you might expect to find birds and birds in places you might expect to find fish.

### With the Children

**Ask:** Where would you usually look for birds? (*in trees, in the sky, on a birdfeeder, up high*) Where would you usually look for fish? (*in water, down low*)

**Say:** I have hidden pictures of animals around the room. Let's see how many you can find.

Give the children a few minutes to look for the pictures, then call the children together to talk about the game.

**Ask:** What made this a silly game? (*The animals were all in the wrong places.*)

**Say:** In today's Bible story there are three women looking for something or someone. But they were looking in the wrong place. Listen carefully to the story to find out what they were looking for and where they were looking.

Hand out the props and figures to the children so they can participate as you tell the story "Jesus Is Alive!" Tell the story a second time to allow all of the children a chance to work with the story props.

**Ask:** What were the women looking for? Where were the women looking for Jesus? Was a tomb the right place to look for Jesus? Why was a tomb the wrong place to look for Jesus?

### Resources

"Jesus Is Alive!"  
(page 78)

### Supplies

story figures from a  
Nativity set or  
pictures of people  
—3 women, 6 men  
(2 with white cloth)  
pictures of birds and  
fish  
8-by-10 piece of  
green felt  
blocks  
rocks  
silk flowers and  
leaves  
white tissue paper

For Older Children

# Mime the Easter Story

Have the children gather around to hear the story *On That Easter Morning* by Mary Joslin.

**Say:** As you listen to the story, think about how you would portray the story without words.

Read the story again as several children act out the story in mime. Read the story several times in order to give others a chance to participate.

## Resources

*On That Easter Morning* by Mary Joslin

## Supplies

Bible-times clothing or bathrobes  
rope belts  
fabric for head coverings

## Supplies

basket of rocks  
container of water

## CLOSING (5 minutes)

Gather the children around a basket of rocks and a container of water.

**Say:** It has been said that one rock and one person can make a difference in our world. Let's find out if that is true.

Give each child an opportunity to come forward, select the rock of her or his choice from the basket, drop it into the water, and quietly return to her or his place in the circle.

**Ask:** What happened when you dropped your rock into the water? (*it made ripples in the water; it splashed out; it made the water level higher; and so forth*)

**Say:** Every time we tell someone about Jesus, we make a difference in the world. We give them hope! We are like ripples in the water. Our action causes things to happen.

**Ask:** How did Jesus make a difference in our world?

**Close With Prayer:** Thank you, God, for giving each of us the opportunity to tell others about you. Thank you for helping us make a difference in your world. Amen.

Let each child take home a rock as a reminder of God's love and hope for the world.

# The Story of Philip

Once upon a time a young boy named Philip was born with Down Syndrome. He was a pleasant child—happy, it seemed—but increasingly aware of the difference between himself and other children. Philip went to Sunday school with a third-grade class at a Methodist church with nine other eight-year-old boys and girls. Like most eight-year-olds with differences, Philip was not readily accepted as a member of his third-grade class. But the teacher helped the children laugh and play and accept each other as friends. And they really cared about each other. The teacher could see it. He knew it. He also knew that Philip was not really a part of the group of children the way the others were. Philip, of course, did not choose nor did he want to be different. That is just the way things were.

The Sunday school teacher had a wonderful plan for his class on the Sunday after Easter one year. He used containers that pantyhose came in—the containers that look like great big eggs. He brought them into Sunday school and gave each one of the children an egg. It was a beautiful spring day so the assigned task was for each child to go outside to find a symbol for new life, put it in the egg (the old pantyhose container), and bring it back to the classroom.

Well, they did this, and it was glorious. And it was confusing. And it was wild. They ran all around, gathering their symbols, and returned to the classroom. They put all the big eggs on a table, and then the teacher began to open them.

He opened one, and there was a flower, and they ooh-ed and aah-ed. He opened another, and there was a butterfly. “Beautiful,” all the girls said, since it was hard for eight-year-old boys to say “beautiful.” He opened another and there was a rock. And as third graders will, some laughed, and some said, “That’s crazy! How’s a rock supposed to be

like new life?” But the smart little boy whose egg they had opened said, “That’s mine. And I knew all of you would get flowers and buds and leaves and butterflies and stuff like that. So I got a rock because I wanted to be different. And for me, that’s new life.” They all laughed.

The teacher opened the next one, and there was nothing inside. The other children, as eight-year-olds will, said, “That’s not fair! That’s stupid! Somebody didn’t do it right.”

About that time the teacher felt a tug on his shirt and looked down. Philip was standing beside him. “It’s mine!” said Philip. “It’s mine.” And the children said, “You don’t ever do things right, Philip. There’s nothing there!”

“I did so do it,” Philip said. “I did do it. It’s empty—the tomb is empty.”

There was a silence and for people who don’t believe in miracles, I want to tell you that one happened that day. From that time on it was different. Philip suddenly became a part of the group. They took him in. He entered. He was set free from his tomb of differentness.

Philip died that summer. His family had known since the time that he was born that he wouldn’t live out a full life span. Many other things had been wrong with his tiny, little body. So with an infection that most other children could have quickly shrugged off, Philip died. His funeral was held at the church. And on that day, nine eight-year-old children marched up to the altar with their Sunday school teacher and laid there an empty egg—an empty, old discarded pantyhose egg.

(Adapted from “The Story of Philip” written by Harry Pritchett, Jr. It was originally published in *The Saint Luke’s Journal of Theology* 19:3 (June 1976), 209-212. *SLJT* was renamed *Sewanee Theological Review* in 1991 and is published by The University of the South’s School of Theology in Sewanee, Tennessee.)

## Jesus Is Alive!

Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man who loved Jesus. *(Place a piece of felt in front of you and have a child add a male figure.)*

Joseph had a tomb made for himself among some rocks in a garden. It was like a cave. *(Help children place a ring of blocks on the felt and put rocks on top. Allow others to add silk flowers and leaves to make a garden.)*

After Jesus died, Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus' body, wrapped it in cloth *(have a child wrap another male figure in a tissue paper)*, and put it in the tomb he had made for himself, because he loved Jesus. *(Place the wrapped figure in the tomb.)*

Some of the women who had been friends of Jesus followed Joseph to see where he placed Jesus' body. Among them were Mary, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. *(As each woman's name is mentioned, have a child place a female figure near the tomb.)*

Then the women left to wait until the sabbath was over and to prepare spices for Jesus' body. *(Have the children walk the women to a home made out of two or three blocks.)*

Putting spices on a special loved one's body was a common thing to do in Bible times. But it was Friday evening, and it was getting late. The women knew they would have to wait until early Sunday to put spices on Jesus' body. They could not go the next day because it was the sabbath, their day of worship. *(Remove the Joseph figure.)*

Jesus had told his disciples that he would be raised from the dead in three days. The people who had wanted Jesus to be killed did not believe that Jesus could really come back to life, but they were afraid that Jesus' disciples would come back and steal his body. So they rolled a large stone in front of the entrance to the tomb *(have a child put a rock in front of the tomb's entrance)* and placed guards on both sides to keep people away from the tomb. *(Place two male figures as guards.)*

The women got up very early on Sunday morning to go to the tomb. *(Walk the women toward the tomb.)*

When they got to the tomb, the large stone had been moved and the tomb was empty. *(Let a child roll the stone away.)*

The women were puzzled, sad, and confused. They wondered who had taken Jesus' body and where it had been taken.

Suddenly, two men, as bright as lightning, stood beside them. *(Place the two men dressed in white near the tomb.)* The women were afraid.

The men said to the women, "Why are you looking for someone who is alive in a tomb where dead people belong? Jesus is not here. He is alive!"

The women were amazed and full of joy. They hurried away to tell the disciples that Jesus was alive!