

the  
Jesus   
Storybook  
Bible  
Curriculum

# God's wonderful surprise

The Resurrection, from Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

*The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum*  
By Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas

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## Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.

☉ Briefly recap the main point of the previous story: “Last time we read about Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus died on the cross in our place to rescue us from our sin. We also memorized a verse about why Jesus died.”

☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “1 Peter 3:18 — ‘Christ died for sins once for all, to bring you to God.’”

☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, say: “Jesus knew he had to die so that we can be brought back to God. Jesus taught that to his disciples many times. He also told them something else would happen. He told them that after three days he would rise.”

## Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

**Aim:** To expend energy and introduce the idea of rising from the dead.

**Materials:** None.

1. Ask: “How do you know that I am alive? I know it sounds like a strange question, but how do you know that I am alive?”

2. Get answers; e.g., you walk, breathe, think, talk, move, etc. Say: “Exactly, so if I were dead, none of those things would be true anymore. If I wanted to play dead, then I would not talk, and I would try to show that I was not breathing, and I’d try to lie perfectly still. Everyone try that now. Lie down on the ground and play dead.”

3. Make appropriate comments; e.g., “I can hear some of you breathing!” “Some of you are moving; be as still as possible!” etc.

4. Once everyone has mastered this, say: “Everyone stay where you are, and I’ll tell you our game. One of you will lie down in the center of the circle and play dead. Everyone else will stand up in the circle and slowly move toward you. At any time you can suddenly rise up and chase everyone else. You need to try to catch as many people as possible before they get to the walls. When they get to the walls, they are safe.”

5. Say: “The trick is to stay as still as possible in the center for as long as you can so people get closer to you. Those of you in the circle, you have to move toward the center, you cannot stop or run away until the person playing dead rises. The first person to get caught is then the next to play dead. Who would like to play dead first?”

6. Play the game a few times, commenting on the action and repeating the rules as necessary.

7. Toward the end of the allocated time, ask everyone to sit back down in the circle. Say: “We read last time that Jesus died and was buried. Jesus wasn’t playing dead like we just played; he really was dead. Jesus died on the cross and was buried in a tomb. But that was not the end of Jesus. Are you ready for our story today?”

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 310–317 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD3 track 11.

### Notes for Teachers on the Text

The resurrection of Jesus is neither a lovely myth developed decades after Jesus' death, nor a symbol of new life, nor a hallucination based on wishful thinking, nor a trick. Rather, it is a historical phenomenon, witnessed to and attested by numerous reliable sources. The biblical evidence cannot "prove" beyond a shadow of a doubt that the resurrection occurred. But the evidence is nearly irrefutable that hundreds of people—who had no cultural or religious reason to believe it—testified that they saw the risen Christ, often repeatedly, over a 40-day span after his death. Three basic lines of evidence converge to convince us that Jesus rose from the dead: the empty tomb, the testimony of numerous eyewitnesses, and the long-term impact on the lives of Jesus' followers.

☉ First, the empty tomb. There are a few non-supernatural explanations posited for the empty tomb. There is the theory that Jesus did not die on the cross, but revived in the tomb. But note that the burial accounts in the Gospels "certify" that Jesus was really dead. Joseph of Arimathea is named as an identified witness who actually had Jesus' body wrapped up and sealed it in a tomb (Mark 15:46). A Roman centurion (who would be an expert) bore witness of his death to Pilate (who would be the legal authority; Mark 15:44–45). Multiple experts and witnesses prove he was really dead. There is also the theory that the disciples stole the body. But this is contradicted by both the second and third lines of evidence. There is also the theory that enemies stole Jesus' body. This is the weakest of all the theories, since his enemies would have had strong reasons to produce the body, if they had it.

☉ Second, the testimony of numerous eyewitnesses. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 makes a long list of people who claimed to have seen the risen Christ personally, and notes in verse 6: "most of whom are still living." How could Paul write that "Mary and

Peter said they saw the risen Jesus" if Peter and Mary were still living and saying, "no we didn't"? Scholars have noted that legendary accounts of historical events take at least two generations to accrue, long after the eyewitnesses are gone to act as controls on the narratives. But many of the eyewitnesses were "still living." Note also that the eyewitness accounts are too numerous and the groups of eyewitnesses are too large for this to have been a hallucination or a conspiracy.

☉ Third, the long-term impact on the lives of Jesus' followers. Scholars recognize that first-century Jewish people did not believe in an individual resurrection, but only in a general resurrection at the end of time. But despite the fact that their belief system provided no basis for it, the disciples began to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus. And, despite the fact that they were poor and cowardly and marginal, they developed a confidence and joy that enabled them to spread the gospel powerfully. Most impressive of all is the historical fact that nearly all the early apostles died as martyrs. It is hard to believe that this kind of self-sacrifice would be done for a hoax or a delusion.

Historian N. T. Wright notes in *Who Was Jesus?*: "It will not do, therefore, to say that Jesus' disciples... invented the idea of Jesus' 'resurrection' as a way of coping with a cruelly broken dream. That has an initial apparent psychological plausibility, but it won't work as serious first-century history. We know of lots of other messianic and similar movements in the Jewish world roughly contemporary with Jesus. In many cases the leader died a violent death at the hands of authorities. In not one single case do we hear the slightest mention of the disappointed followers claiming that their hero had been raised from the dead. They knew better. 'Resurrection' was not a private event.... Claiming that the original leader was alive again was simply not an option. Unless, of course, he was."

## Understanding the Story

15 min. 

**Aim:** To understand that Jesus was raised from the dead.

**Materials:** A paper crown for each child (this can be made by cutting a crown shape out of paper; do not tape the ends together until after the crown is decorated); tape; child-safe glue; decorating items, e.g., stickers, pieces of colored paper, tin foil, etc.; crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, say: "It has been three days since Jesus died. The women go to the tomb expecting to find a dead body. What three things do they find instead? Correct, the stone that blocked the entrance of the tomb had moved, Jesus' body was gone, and an angel told them that Jesus had risen and was alive."
2. Say: "Jesus is risen, Jesus was raised from the dead, and Jesus' resurrection are all ways of saying that Jesus was dead, but has now come back to life. The tomb is empty. There is no body. Jesus is alive, just like he said. The King is alive."
3. Hand each child a cut-out shape of a crown and a crayon. Ask them to write the words "Jesus is alive!" in big letters on the crown. You may want to write this on a blackboard so they can copy it. Put the decorating items in the center of the circle and give the children 5 minutes to decorate their crowns. Help them as necessary.
4. After 5 minutes, tape the ends of the paper together to form a crown for each child. Ask the children to help you put away the decorating items.
5. Say: "Jesus the King is alive. At the end of our story Mary runs to tell this to the other disciples. What about you? Can you tell the story of Jesus and tell others that he is alive? Look at your paper."
6. Give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon, saying: "Six events from Jesus' life are on the paper. Can you put them in the correct order? You need to number them 1 through 6 in the boxes, but let me read them to you first."
7. Read aloud the sentences on the handout. Remind the children that the events are in the wrong order and give them 1 minute to number them in the correct order. You may want to allow them to work in pairs.
8. After 1 minute, ask someone to read aloud the numbers they have written down (i.e., 2, 4, 1, 3, 6, 5). Then ask another child to read aloud the six events in order.
9. Say: "That is the story of Jesus' life. I'd like some of you to tell us in your own words the story of Jesus' life from the center of the circle. Who would like to do that? You may use the sentences you just put in order to help you, but you should tell the story of Jesus' life in your own words. When you get to the end, I want everyone to hold up their crowns and shout 'Jesus the King is alive!' together."
10. Ask three or four children to go to the center of the circle in turn and tell the story of Jesus' life. Prompt as needed. At the end of each child's retelling, get the entire circle to hold up their crowns and shout "Jesus the King is alive!"

**For larger groups:** You may want to divide the group into smaller circles, each with a teacher, for the very last part of this activity so that more children get a turn to tell the story of Jesus' life.

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## Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: “Jesus died on the cross and after three days he rose from the dead. The tomb was empty. There was no body.”

Say: “Jesus is alive, just like he said. Jesus the King is alive.”

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## Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: “What did we discover about Jesus from today’s story?”

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

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## Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God that Jesus was raised from the dead and that Jesus is alive.

Ask the children to pray, praising God that Jesus the King is alive.

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## A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

2 min. 

☉ Introduce the verse: “The verse we recited at the start tells us why Jesus died and was raised to life again.”

☉ Announce the verse: “Your verse to practice at home is 1 Peter 3:18 — ‘Christ died for sins once for all, to bring you to God.’”

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group.

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents, to memorize the verse for next time, and to take their crown home with them.