

THE RESURRECTION

by Jesse Morris and Michele Hershberger

KEY VERSE:

The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." Luke 24:5

FAITH STORY:

Luke 24:1-12

FAITH FOCUS:

The women went to Jesus' tomb because they were going to bring spices according to Jewish custom. But they got there and the tomb was open so they went in and were really surprised because they didn't see the body. Suddenly two men stood beside them. The men explained that Jesus was not dead in the tomb but alive. The women remembered that Jesus had told them this would happen. They returned to tell the other apostles. The eleven didn't believe them so Peter went to check it out, and he was amazed.

SESSION GOAL:

For students to think about how unexpected the resurrection was, and how important it is to their faith and their lives.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session, the students will:

- Imagine what it might have been like to be "in the shoes" of the people who were surprised by Jesus' resurrection
- Identify the proof and the importance of the resurrection

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Talk to a several students beforehand to plan to tell a story about the biggest surprise in their life, or prepare to tell a story yourself.
- 2 Dry erase board, chalkboard or newsprint and markers
- 3 Paper and colorful markers
- 4 Fresh flowers such as daisies, carnations or roses—a minimum of one per student—and a vase to put them in. Have these flowers in an arrangement on a small table, along with a candle and Bible, when students arrive.

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (5–7 minutes)

Invite students that you contacted in advance to tell the story of the biggest surprise in their life, or tell your personal story about the biggest surprise in your life.

CONNECT: (5–7 minutes)

Ask students to help you make a list of some of the biggest surprises in the Bible—write the list down on the dry erase board. Come up with at least 15-20 items, and don't let the students stop until the resurrection of Jesus is on the list.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (10–15 minutes)

Read the passage, Luke 24:1-12, one verse at a time. After each verse, ask students: What did the people in this verse EXPECT to happen? What ACTUALLY happened?

Go through the passage again, but ask students to think about how they would have reacted during each part of the story. In what ways would their reactions have been the same? In what ways would they have been different?

Go through the passage a third time, this time asking students to identify proof that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. In addition to what you find in this passage, use points found in Insights from Scripture.

Ask: *Is it hard for you to believe in the resurrection? Why or why not? What difference does it make whether you do or don't believe it?*

APPLY: (7–10 minutes)

Say: *When we believe in the resurrection, we believe that Jesus brings good news and hope into our lives. Think of a time in your life when you felt that Jesus was indeed "alive and well" in your life. When have you felt healing or hope in your life? Maybe it was a big thing, maybe it was a small thing. Draw a picture or write a story about that time.*

Bring the group back together and ask anyone who wants to share their story or picture with the group to do so.

RESPOND: (5–7 minutes)

Gather students around the small table with the candle, Bible and vase of flowers. Light the candle and turn off the light. **Say:** *I'd like for you to think of something in your life that is either a celebration of the power of Jesus' resurrection, or something in your life in which you need the hope and power of the resurrection to intervene. When you have thought of your example, pick a flower out of the vase.*

When all of the students have their flowers, ask them to spend a few moments in silence talking to God about their celebration or their request for hope and intervention.

Close with this prayer:

Resurrected Jesus, we thank you for coming to our earth, for living among humanity, for taking on our sins and carrying them to the cross. We thank you for dying on our behalf, and then for rising again. We celebrate the life that we have now because of your resurrection, and we ask for you to give us the hope that our hearts crave this morning.

And all God's children said, AMEN!

INSIGHTS INTO SCRIPTURE:

In looking for proof that Jesus rose from the dead, we note the following:

- Women were the first eyewitnesses. If the disciples were lying about the resurrection, they sure wouldn't have women be eyewitnesses, since women's testimony wasn't considered valid anyway.
- The tomb was tightly sealed and guarded. See Matthew 27:62-66 and 28:11-15.
- The additional appearances of Jesus: to the two people walking to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35 and Mark 16:12-13); to Peter in Jerusalem (Luke 24:34); to the ten disciples in the upper room (Luke 24:36-43 and John 20:19-25); to the eleven disciples in the upper room (Mark 16:14 and John 20:26-31); to seven disciples fishing (John 21:1-23); to the eleven disciples on the mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:15-18); to more than 500 people (Acts 15:6) to James (Acts 15:7); and at the Ascension (Luke 24:44-51 and Acts 1:3-8)

The phrase "Nothing is certain but death and taxes" may not have been known to the people who knew Jesus, but it was certainly their reality. Taxes from the Roman government were heavy, and death was...well... death. Final. The end of life. So, to have Jesus' body disappear from the tomb, to be reminded that Jesus told them he would die and rise again was, to say the least, an awesome surprise for Jesus' followers. If Jesus had actually conquered death, what did that mean for their lives?

It meant that their lives, and the world, would never be the same. A resurrected Jesus had given them a new way to look at life, and death. The Jesus who cared about those who felt the least amount of hope would now be available to everyone through the gift of the Holy Spirit; and eternal life would be theirs because he took the place of the sacrificial lamb on the cross.