

LOGOS—At home Bible Study for week of April 9, 2020

Lent 7

The Empty Tomb

Scripture Reference: Matthew 28:1-10

Lesson Focus for younger children: Jesus surprises us!

Intro conversation/activity

- Prepare the three gift boxes. The first box, box #1, is empty. The second box, box #2, contains a pair of sandals. The third box, box #3, contains one 30 inch (77 cm) length of colorful streamer for each kid. Wrap the three boxes with wrapping paper and ribbon and clearly label each appropriately with a 1, 2, or 3.
 - We have lots of guessing to do today! I have three wrapped boxes. Inside each box is something special. You may look at the gifts and carefully shake them. Then make your best guess about what is inside of each box. I'm going to write your guesses on the board. While the kids are examining the boxes, draw three large boxes on the board/paper. Draw a big gift tag to each box, numbered 1, 2, and 3. Who has a guess about what's in box #1? Write responses inside the outline of box #1 on the whiteboard. As kids make guesses, say comments such as, Hmmm. That's a good guess. I wonder if you're right.
 - Box #2 is a little bit heavier than box #1. What could be in box #2? Write down kids' responses inside the box #2 outline on the board.
 - Did you shake box #3? It makes an interesting sound. Can someone shake box #3 gently for us, and we'll listen carefully? Choose a volunteer to shake box #3. Did you hear it? I wonder what's inside of box #3. Tell me your best guess. Write down responses inside box #3 on the board.

Easter is a very special day in the church! It is the day we remember that Jesus is alive. Jesus rose from the dead and got a new name. Now we call him Jesus Christ. We believe in Jesus Christ, so we are called Christians. On Easter, Jesus surprised us with God's love.

Today's Bible story is full of good news because Easter is such a special day. There's a clue about today's story in box #1. Let's read the guesses you made about what is in box #1. Read the guesses aloud and unwrap the box. It's empty? How could finding nothing be good news? Emptiness was a great surprise in today's story. I wonder what happened!

Prayer

- Box #1 from Arrival Time

Open your hands with your palms up, to show that your palms are empty. Demonstrate how to hold hands palms up in a gesture of emptiness. Now repeat each line of the prayer after me.

Loving God,

You made each one of us.
You filled each one of us with your love.
Now fill our empty hands with good news,
Good news to share with others
As we go on our way today!

Amen.

Open the Bible:

The Empty Tomb Storytelling

Spark Resources

- Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

- Box #2 from Arrival Time
- Guesses from opening activity

Today's Bible story is called The Empty Tomb. Hmm. There's that word: empty. What was inside box #1? (nothing) Box #1 was empty. How would you feel if you got a birthday present, and you opened it and it was empty? Affirm responses. Lots of times the word "empty" makes us feel sad and disappointed, like when we're drinking our favorite drink and then it's all gone. Our glass is empty. But in today's Bible story the word "empty" makes us very, very happy. What a surprise!

Find "The Empty Tomb" on pages 482–487 of the Spark Story Bible or the noted scripture from your family home Bible.

It's time to open another box, box #2. Read aloud the kids' guesses for box #2, and unwrap the box. Hold up the sandals. Show me where we wear sandals. (on our feet) Listen for the word "feet" in our story. When you hear it, tap your feet.

Read "The Empty Tomb". Jesus surprises us in lots of ways.

- How did Jesus surprise the women with emptiness? (Jesus' tomb was empty when the women arrived.)
- How did Jesus surprise Mary with his feet? (She tripped, fell down, saw his feet, and knew they belonged to Jesus.)
- What was the biggest surprise of all? (The women thought that Jesus was dead, but Jesus was alive!)

Have a brief conversation about the story. Ask the kids these questions?

- Why were the women going to Jesus' tomb? (They had a job to do; they were going to rub spices on Jesus' dead body.)
- What new job did the angel give the women to do? (The angel told them to tell the disciples that Jesus was alive.)
- Tell about a time when you were very sad and then very happy. Affirm all responses.
- What would you say to Jesus if you saw him in the garden? Affirm responses
 - Some examples might be: "What happened?" "I thought you died on the cross." "Welcome back, Jesus!" "I'm so happy that you are alive!"

Activity:

The Empty Egg Game—adapt for your family numbers

- 2 empty egg cartons
- 24 plastic Easter eggs
- Jelly beans or small treat
- 2 bowls
 - Before you gather fill nine eggs in each carton with jelly beans. Leave the remaining three empty. Fill each egg carton with nine filled and three empty eggs.
 - How did Jesus surprise the women who came to the tomb? (The tomb was empty.) Why was it good news that box #1 was empty? (Jesus was alive, not dead in the tomb.)

Let's play an egg-rolling game. First we need two teams. Divide the kids by the colors of clothing they are wearing, creating two equal teams. Pick up an egg carton and open it up to show the kids what's inside. What do you see inside the egg carton? (12 plastic eggs) Some of the plastic eggs inside this carton have a treat inside of them and some of them are empty.

Here's how we play the game. One by one, the players on each team will run down to the egg carton, select an egg, and roll it back to their team using their feet. The team then opens the egg. If it's empty, the team calls out "Jesus is alive!" and the game continues. If the egg has something in it, the team calls out "Happy Easter!" empties the candy into their team's bowl, and the game continues. We'll keep playing until each team has rolled all of its eggs. It's Easter! Let's celebrate the good news.

Give each team a bowl. Place one egg carton per team (filled with plastic Easter eggs) at one end of the room. Begin the game at the opposite end of the room from the egg cartons. After each team has finished, eat the jelly beans to celebrate the sweet news that Jesus is alive!

Closing conversation/prayer:

Today we learned that Jesus surprises us. Jesus surprised the women at the tomb. The tomb was empty! Where was Jesus? Jesus surprised the women in the garden. He was alive! We learned that emptiness can be very good news.

Prayer Time

Supplies

- Box #3 from Arrival Time
- Guesses from opening activity

How do you think the four women felt when they saw that Jesus was alive? Affirm responses. Some of them may have felt like jumping up high and cheering!

It looks like we have one more box to open. Let's find out what you guessed about this box. Read kids' guesses and unwrap box #3. Without the kids seeing what is inside the box, grab all of the streamers together, throw them up high, and shout, "Surprise! Jesus is alive!" Ask the kids to pick up one streamer apiece. Go around the circle and drape each kid's streamer around the back of his or her neck and over the front of his or her shoulders as you say: Jesus is alive! It's your job to tell the good news!

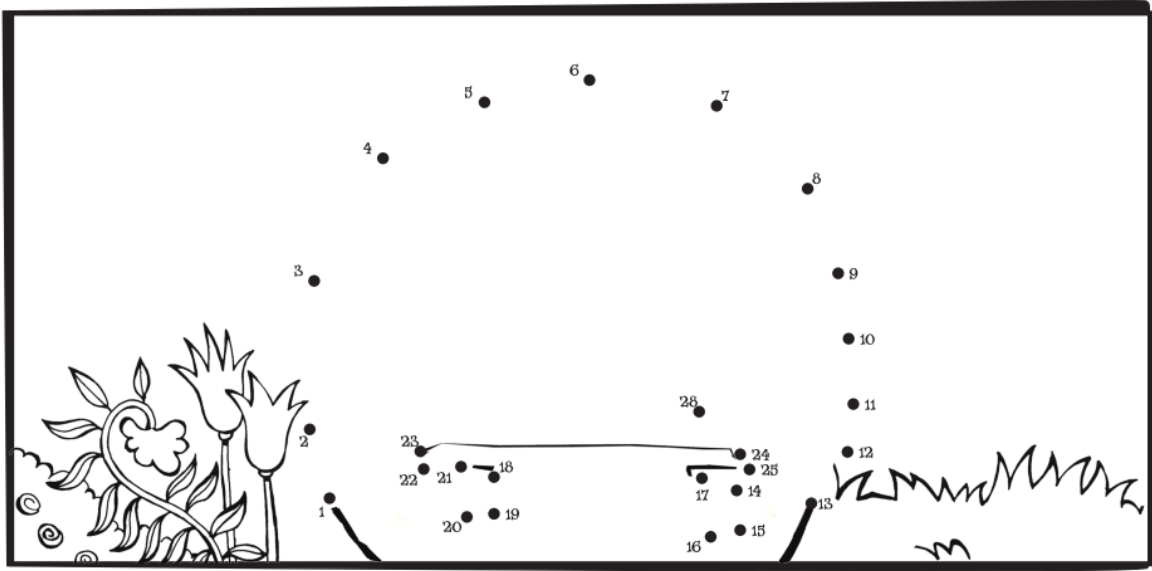
Let's close our lesson with a cheer, celebrating that Jesus lives! Repeat each line after me.

Hip, hip, hip, hooray!
Jesus Christ is risen today!
Shout it high! Shout it low!
Shout it everywhere you go!
Hip, hip, hip, hooray!
Jesus Christ is risen today!
The tomb is empty! He's alive!
Give your friends a big high five! (Pause to do this.)
Hip, hip, hip, hooray!
Jesus Christ is risen today!

Extra Activity

Surprise on Easter

The disciples went to the tomb where they laid Jesus' body. They were very surprised at what they found when they got there! Connect the dots to show the place they visited.



Lesson Focus for older children:

Intro

- Supplies: sealed envelope from last weeks Holy Week Lesson
- Today, let's resurrect those hopes to see what it feels like to bring back something you've buried.

Pass the envelopes back out to the kids. If any kids are willing to read their hopes out loud, that's great! If not, that's ok! Today is all about good news, and hope being alive!

Compared to the length of last week's Holy Week story, this Bible story is short. Can a story that's short on words mean a whole lot? (Yes!)

Prayer

God of life and hope and peace,
We come here with empty hearts.
Come and be our victory feast,
Fill our lives with brand-new starts.
We love you and sing your praise
For what you've done for everyone.
Forevermore, for all our days
We'll worship Jesus Christ, your Son!
Amen.

Open the Bible

The Empty Tomb Story

Help kids find Matthew 28:1–10 on page 1097 in the Spark Bible or in your family Bible.

Sometimes, before we learn anything new, we have to empty our heads of the ideas we've already created. Many of us have heard today's story before. So, before every sentence in today's story, we're going to pause for 10 seconds of silence, where we can forget our previous ideas, and get ready to listen with new ears.

As you read the story, do just that—pause before each sentence, leaving room for kids to really listen. When you've finished, ask:

- What new ideas did you get filled up with while listening today?
- What empty things did you hear about in today's story?
- Were there any empty things that you didn't hear about but that might have been there, too?
- How can a place that seems empty, like the tomb, be full of something?
- How can something small, like a trip to a grave, turn into something big and wonderful?

As soon as Jesus is resurrected, things get crazy pretty quickly. Everyone is headed somewhere important, with important news to share.

Consider the following discussion questions:

- What do you think the disciples had planned before this news? What was on their calendars? (not much)
- What do you think changed when they learned Jesus was alive? (Everything!) What did they have to do now? (A lot—telling others, traveling, etc.)

- When was the last time your life changed in a big way over a small passage of time? What happened?

CRAFT:
Heart Bouquets

Kids create small centerpieces as they remember, "Empty tomb; full hearts."



Supplies:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Wooden skewers
- Markers
- Tape
- Small clay flowerpots, 2-3 inches (5-8 cm) in diameter
- Foam balls (sized to fit inside the pots)
- White glue
- Precut paper hearts (optional)

Instructions:

We celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Easter each year. It's a joy-filled time as we remember that Jesus died and was raised, and now he lives. Jesus always lives with us—he lives in our hearts! But we don't just celebrate on Easter. We celebrate every day that Jesus is alive! You'll be making a centerpiece today that you can use any time your family has a gathering to remind you that Jesus is alive.

1. Invite kids to cut hearts of different sizes and colors and tape one heart onto each skewer.
2. Show kids how to push a foam ball firmly into a pot and use the foam to hold their decorated skewers in place like a bouquet of hearts. If kids would like to create layered effects, help them to carefully break off some length from some skewers.
3. Direct kids to cut a pennant shape from paper, write "Jesus fills our hearts!" on it, tape it to a skewer, and add it to the bouquet as a decorative flag.
4. Invite kids to cut shapes and decorations out of paper and glue them onto their pots for a finishing touch.

These flowerpots look great! You're all wonderful artists. I hope that you display your pot centerpiece often. Remember—empty tomb; full hearts.

Closing Conversation and Prayer:

Again, before today's story, the disciples had probably given up on any plans they made to follow Jesus. But after they hear the good news, they knew that anything could happen!

- If we empty our plans in exchange for Jesus' plans, what might happen?
- What can we do if our plans change unexpectedly? What kind of attitude do we need?
- How can we face changes with joy?
- Why would we want to give up on our own plans to follow Jesus?

Remember that behind every change, God could be at work, shaking the earth with a good kind of earthquake. Easter joy overcomes frustration and confusion!

Closing Prayer: the curriculum suggests that in closing we pray a creed of our church.

Let's pray the Apostles' Creed,

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. AMEN.*

Extra Activity:

Follow Me!

Follow the women to the empty tomb as you track the verse from Matthew. Starting with "I Know," follow the verse as the words go right, left, down, or diagonally. If you get stuck, turn to page 1097 in your Spark Bible for help.

