



ELEMENTARY LARGE GROUP

LESSON 4 THE RESURRECTION

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Lives!

SCRIPTURE: John 20

GOD'S BIG STORY: After Jesus dies on the cross, His body is placed in a tomb. Three days later His followers find the tomb empty and discover that Jesus is again alive!

WORD OF WONDER: I will spend time thinking about everything you have done. I will consider all your mighty acts. —Psalm 77:12

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- **Pre-service Activity: Rescue Relay 8–10 min
- Welcome Question: What do you do for fun? 2 min
- SMALL GROUP 25 min
- Declaring God's Wonder 1–2 min
- Prayer of Invitation 1–2 min
- Worship: Love Come Down, Praise You Anywhere 8–10 min
- God's Big Story 5–6 min
- Connecting the Wonder Truth 1–2 min
- Responding in Worship: 3–4 min
- Blessing Your Kids 1–2 min
- SMALL GROUP: Responding in Worship Activity 5–10 min



Schedule:

Pre-service Activities: 10 min before service

Small Group: 20-25 minutes

Large Group: 30-35 minutes

Small Group Response Activity: 5-10 min



Connected Easter Elem Spotify playlist

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 77:12

When your future feels uncertain, remember: *Jesus lives.*

When pain twists its knife, filling your days and stealing away your sleep, remember: *Jesus lives.*

When friendships strain or snap, remember: *Jesus lives.*

When bills pile up and you dread checking your bank balance, remember: *Jesus lives.*

When anxiety takes your breath away, remember: *Jesus lives.*

When death robs you of someone you can't live without, remember: *Jesus lives.*

Jesus lives.

Those two words—words you'll share with your kids in this lesson—fuel hope. More than hope, actually—they fuel a certainty that beyond whatever troubles tear at us today is an eternity of joy with Jesus. Because He lives, we will live. Because we're His, there's no need to fear that death will one day lay claim to us.

As you read John 20:1–20, put yourself outside that empty cave. Breathe in the morning air, feel the dew beneath your feet. Stare into the tomb and hear the angel's question: "Why are you crying?" (John 20:13).

Why, indeed? The reality that Jesus lives changes ... everything.

May the Holy Spirit instill in you the fresh hope that Jesus' first followers felt when they saw the risen Christ. And may the kids you serve discover that the hope that's in you can be the hope that fills their hearts too.

Jesus lives.

—**Mikal Keefer**

Children's Ministry Volunteer and Author

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Mary Magdalene was part of a group of women who followed Jesus, traveling with Him and His disciples. Jesus had driven seven demons out of her (Luke 8:2). She was present at the crucifixion (John 19:25) and saw where Jesus' body was laid (Mark 15:47).

WHAT?

Mary went to Jesus' tomb and found the stone removed. She thought Jesus' body had been taken, but Jesus had risen! After Mary saw two angels in the tomb, Jesus appeared to her. He sent her to tell the disciples, and He later appeared to them.

WHERE?

Jesus' body was laid in a tomb newly hewn from rock and belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. The tomb was in a garden near Golgotha, where Jesus had been crucified, outside the city gate of Jerusalem but still near the city.

WHEN?

Jesus died and was placed in the tomb on the Jewish Preparation Day before the Sabbath started at sundown. Jesus rose from the dead the day after the Sabbath, and the empty tomb was discovered by Mary early that morning.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Jesus' resurrection means a power greater than death has arrived on the scene of history. Jesus defeated death! The God of Scripture and of all history lives, and the good news is that He will also raise His people to imperishable life on the last day.

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 77:12

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

**Pre-service Activity: Rescue Relay

8-10 MINUTES PRE-SERVICE

SUPPLIES: 25'-to-50' ropes (2), empty 2 L plastic bottles or large plastic hoops (2), masking or painter's tape or cones

Ahead of time, use masking or painter's tape to create start and finish lines on the floor, or use cones to mark the start and finish lines.

Tie the end of a rope around an empty two-liter plastic bottle or large plastic hoop to create a rescue rope. Repeat to create a second rescue rope. Set the bottles or hoops at one end of the room by the finish line. Stretch the ropes across the room and place their loose ends at the start line.

In this game, kids will race to complete the rescue relay mission first.

Gather kids and divide the group into two teams. (consider three teams for larger groups)

"In God's big story, we read about God rescuing His people by providing a way through the Red Sea. We're going to do a fun rescue relay mission of our own! When I say, "Go!" the first person will pull the rope until the bottle reaches the start line. Then she will grab the bottle, race across the room, place the bottle/hoop behind the finish line, and then run back to tag the next person in line. Demonstrate this for the kids, making sure the rope still extends back to the start line when the bottle/hoop is behind the finish line. The first team to have all of their members complete the rescue mission wins!

Once both teams have finished the rescue mission, congratulate the winning team and affirm all the kids for being excellent rescuers. Then gather kids and continue:

Today we practiced our rescue skills, but God's ability to rescue is much greater. God rescued His people from slavery and made the way for the people of Israel to escape through the Red Sea on dry ground! God is the ultimate rescuer!"

Make It Inclusive!

Tip for Including Kids with Unique Abilities

Kids can pull the ropes from a standing or seated position. If some kids have limited mobility, encourage them to be the full-time rope puller who pulls the rope (from a seated position) to bring the bottle/hoop back to the start line each time. Their teammates will then take turns running the bottle/hoop back to the finish line each time.

Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question.

Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

What do you do for fun?

"One thing that all your fun activities have in common: You can enjoy them because you are alive! Today we'll discover what it was like for someone to not just be alive but to rise from the dead to be alive again (spoiler alert: It's Jesus!). But first, it's time for small group."

Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

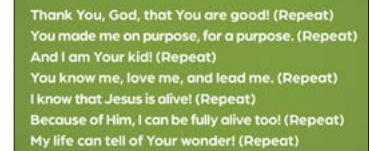
And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

I know that Jesus is alive! (Kids repeat.)

Because of Him, I can be fully alive too! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Thank You, God, that You are good! (Repeat)
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Repeat)
And I am Your kid! (Repeat)
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Repeat)
I know that Jesus is alive! (Repeat)
Because of Him, I can be fully alive too! (Repeat)
My life can tell of Your wonder! (Repeat)

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words. Here is an example: **Father God, as we listen and learn about the resurrection, may Your Spirit teach us, lead us, and show us Your love and plan. Show us how Jesus loves us and gave His life for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you!

"We're going to stand and sing together! One way that we show love to God is to worship through song! So stand up, sing loud, and join in the motions with us. God loves to hear us sing praises to Him! Let's stand together and sing!"

WORSHIP VIDEOS: Love Come Down, Praise You Anywhere

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE

"Today, we're exploring a true story from the Bible that happens right after Jesus' death on the cross. This amazing event leads to some incredible news! Let's see how this changed everything for Mary and the the disciples!"

VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY



LESSON 4 THE RESURRECTION

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: cardboard boxes (4), permanent marker (prep only), stone, linen cloths (such as dish towels), flashlight or battery-powered lantern (optional), magnifying glass (optional), detective costume (optional), microphone (optional)

RESOURCES: *The Resurrection Experience It! Script* (1 extra copy)

Ahead of time, gather four simple cardboard boxes with lids or the ability to close. In permanent marker, label the first three boxes “Clue #1,” “Clue #2,” and “Clue #3.” Label the fourth box “The Final Clue.”

Fill the boxes: Put a stone, large enough to be visible to the kids, inside “Clue #1.” Put neatly folded linen cloths (such as dish towels) inside “Clue #2.” You could leave the third box, “Clue #3,” empty or place a battery-powered lantern or flashlight (turned on) inside. (This is optional because in some spaces, the light won’t be visible.) “The Final Clue” can remain empty. Close up the boxes or place lids on them.

Set the stage: Place the first three clue boxes, each a couple feet apart, on your staging area where they will be visible to the kids as they arrive. For “The Final Clue,” ask another adult volunteer (who is willing to play a sneaky role) to bring this clue onstage according to the cue written in the script. (Print an extra copy of the Experience It! Script so this volunteer can follow along and not miss her clue.) Keep “The Final Clue” box out of sight until the designated point in the script.

Get into character: You are an eager, somewhat dramatic detective trying to solve the mystery of what happened to Jesus. While you are quite good at observing and sorting out clues, you have trouble naming emotions and must act them out for the kids to identify. A magnifying glass and detective costume would help set the scene but are not necessary.

Once kids are gathered, tiptoe onto the stage area like a detective hunting for clues. Have fun with the discovery of the three clue boxes! Maybe while tracking footprints, you bump into the first box. You try to lift it, but it’s too heavy. Perhaps you observe the outside of the second box for fingerprints. Maybe you pick up the third one and gently rattle it to hear what’s inside. When the kids’ interest is sufficiently piqued, take notice of them, squint your eyes a bit like you’re deep in thought, scratch your chin, and say, “Hmmm.” Then announce: **Jesus was missing!**

Pace back and forth like you’re thinking it out. **“These are the facts: After Jesus died to make the way from slavery to freedom and from death to life, His body was taken from the cross, wrapped in linen cloths, and placed in a nearby tomb. The tomb was in a garden. A large stone was placed in front of the tomb’s entrance. Jesus had died on a Friday. The next day was the Sabbath day of rest, which ended at sundown. Stop pacing. Then early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark ... that’s when everything got ... mysterious.”**

On that dark Sunday morning, a woman named Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. Mary was one of Jesus’ friends and followers. She was very—oh, what’s the word? Act sad and encourage the kids to name the feeling by shouting it out. Sad. Mary was very sad about Jesus’ death. His followers had put so much hope in Him. How could He be dead?

Make It Inclusive! Give kids with extra energy an opportunity for more movement by inviting them up to open Clues #1 and #2.

When Mary got to the tomb (head to the first box), **there was the first clue!** Open the first clue box to reveal a stone. Hold it up, and in your best shocked/dramatic voice, say: **The stone had been moved from the entrance. Mary ran to tell Peter and John, two of Jesus' disciples. Peter and John ran to the tomb. John got there first. He bent down and looked inside. And there** (go to the second box) **was the second clue!** Open the second clue box to reveal folded linen cloths. **The linen cloths were lying there ... but Jesus' body was gone! What was going on?! When Peter showed up, he went straight into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths and the funeral cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. It was lying in its place undisturbed. Why would grave robbers take time to leave the cloth so neatly wrapped? John came inside the tomb and saw the same thing. Peter and John were very—oh, what's the word?** Act confused until the kids say, "Confused." **Confused.** Scratch your chin and say, "Hmmm." **Jesus was missing!**

Peter and John went back to the place where they were staying, but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. Remember she was—oh, what's the word? Act sad until the kids say, "Sad." **Sad. Mary bent over to look in the tomb and through watery eyes saw something unexpected: the third clue!** Open the third clue box and then jump back like a really bright light just shone into your face from inside the box. **Whoa, that's bright!** Take another peek. **Whoa, my eyes! It's hard to see, but ...** Peer inside box. **Two angels dressed in white were sitting where Jesus' body had been. "Woman, why are you crying?" they asked Mary. She answered, "They have taken my Lord away. ... I don't know where they have put him"** (John 20:13). Scratch your chin and say, "Hmmm." **Jesus was missing!**

Have an adult volunteer sneak onstage behind you with the fourth box labeled "The Final Clue" and place it somewhere kids can see it. The volunteer then exits. Continue the next few lines until the kids point you to the box or you discover it. **What now? We are out of clues. Will we ever solve this mystery?** Make a disgruntled or frustrated face until you see the fourth box: **Oh! The final clue**

Then Mary turned around. Someone else was standing behind her. Who was it? The gardener? Mary couldn't tell. The man asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" Mary said, "Sir, did you carry him away? Tell me where you put him. Then I will go and get him" (John 20:15). **She just wanted to know where Jesus' body was. Then the man said ...** (open "The Final Clue" box) **"Mary." He said her name. "Mary."**

Leader Tip: For greater dramatic effect, you could have a non-visible adult volunteer on a mic say, "Mary" when the box is opened and again when the name is repeated.

Mary knew that voice. She had heard it many times before. It wasn't the gardener. It was Jesus! Jesus was alive! He had risen from the dead! He was right there in front of her. Mary cried out, " 'Rabboni!' (which means 'Teacher') " (John 20:16, NIV). **She was so—oh, what's the word?** Act really excited until the kids say, "Excited." **Excited to see Jesus. He had died, but now He was alive again!**

Jesus told Mary to go to those who believe in Him. He said, "Tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God' " (John 20:17). **Soon the risen Jesus would be with His Father in heaven. Mary went to tell the disciples the incredible news. "She said, 'I have seen the Lord!' "** (John 20:18).

That night, the disciples were in a room. They had locked the doors because they were—oh, **what's the word?** Act afraid until the kids say, "Scared/afraid." **Afraid of the Jewish leaders. But locked doors couldn't keep out the risen Jesus. He came in and stood among His disciples. Now they saw what Mary had seen. Jesus was alive! He said to them, "May peace be with you!"** (John 20:19). **Then He showed them His hands and side, which had been pierced on the cross. The disciples were so—oh, what's the word?** Act happy until the kids say, "Happy." **Happy! It's true: Jesus had really died. But now He was alive again! In His great power, He defeated death and rose from the grave forever. Jesus' great power can free us from death's hold too because ...** (scratch your chin and say, "Hmmm") **Jesus isn't missing ... Jesus lives!"**

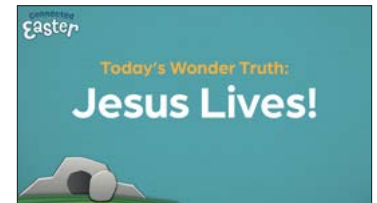
Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS LIVES! Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story?** Allow kids to answer freely.

Jesus' resurrection means a power greater than death has arrived on the scene of history. Jesus defeated death! The God of the Bible and of all history lives. When we follow Jesus, the promise of eternal life with Him is ours!"



Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: Jesus Paid It All

Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids. Use your own words. Here is an example:

Blessing: May you experience the joy of new life through Jesus, your living Savior!

Return to Small Group

Instruct Small Group Leaders to close out their time by completing the "Responding in Worship" Activity at the end of their SG Leader Guide.