

Life of Christ

The Tomb is Empty!

John 20:1-18

Younger Verse

"I have seen the Lord!" John 20:18 (NASB)

Older Verse

"I have seen the Lord!" John 20:18 (NASB)

Bible Story

The following is a summary of the Bible story to help supplement your preparation. In your personal study time, use this summary as a guide, and make notes to help you remember your plans for the lesson. Please do NOT read to the children.

Last week, we talked about how Jesus died. It was a Friday afternoon and He was nailed to a cross and hung there until He died. He died knowing that He had completed everything God sent Him to earth to do. He was taken from the cross and two of His followers, Joseph and Nicodemus, helped ready His body to be buried. He was put in a new cave, one that no one else had ever used. A large stone was rolled across the mouth of the cave to close it.

John does not tell us what happened on the Saturday after Jesus died. But on Sunday, very early in the morning while it was still dark, Jesus' friend Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, or cave. When she arrived at the place, she noticed something. The stone had been moved away from the cave and Jesus was not there! Mary left running! She went to find Peter and John, two of Jesus' disciples. She told them what she had found. She said, "They have taken Jesus and I don't know where they have placed Him."

The disciples went running to see for themselves. Mary also returned with them. They ran towards the cave. When they were almost there, John sprinted ahead of Peter and got to the cave first. John stopped outside of the cave and looked in. When Peter arrived, he ran ahead of John and into the cave. They saw the linen fabric that Joseph and Nicodemus had used to wrap Jesus' body in. It was lying where Jesus had been placed. But there was a linen napkin that had been put on Jesus head. This napkin had been moved to a different place than the other wrappings. John then came into the cave and saw the wrappings. They did not know yet, that Jesus had to come back to life. Jesus had tried to tell them, but they did not understand. So, the disciples headed back home.

Lesson Goals

Understand that Jesus is no longer in a tomb. He is alive!
Understand the importance of knowing Jesus, as Mary did.

Mary stayed by the cave and began crying. She missed Jesus. And on top of missing Him, she had come to finish what Joseph and Nicodemus started and couldn't even find Jesus' body. She cried and cried. As she was crying, she leaned over to look into the empty cave but the cave wasn't empty any more. There were now two angels in the cave, sitting where Jesus' body had been. The angels spoke to her. They asked her why she was crying. Mary told them she was upset because she didn't know where Jesus' body was.

Jesus was right there in the garden! He spoke to Mary, but Mary did not recognize Him because He was different somehow. Jesus also asked Mary why she was crying. Mary, thinking Jesus was the gardener, told Him she wanted to know where He had taken Jesus. Then Jesus spoke Mary's name as He had done many times before. And that is how she knew it was Him, Jesus, alive again! Mary fell to the ground and grabbed Jesus around the feet and legs. What a miracle! What excitement! Jesus was not dead any longer. He was alive! But Jesus had other things He needed to do and other people He needed to visit. Mary couldn't keep holding on to Him. Jesus asked Mary to go tell the others the good news. Mary obeyed Jesus. She went to the disciples and announced to them saying, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she told them all that Jesus had said. What an amazing story! Jesus had come back to life, just like He said He would. Jesus died to pay the price for my sins and for your sins. And after being dead and in the grave, God raised Him back to life.

In our lesson today, did you wonder why Mary did not recognize Jesus or even catch His voice at first? It wasn't until He said her name that she knew who He was. Do you remember when we studied about Jesus being the Good Shepherd? Do you remember who He said His sheep were? They are the people who believe in Him and follow Him and obey Him. In John 10, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me." Mary knew Jesus' voice and she followed Him. How about you? Do you know Jesus? Have you studied about Him, do you follow Him, are you His sheep? If so, He knows you and wants to take care of you. If you don't know Jesus, the one who was dead but came back to life, will you choose to follow Him today?

**Memory Verse
Activity**

Make cardstock sunglasses. Draw off a simple pattern. Write the memory verse where the lenses should be. Allow each student to decorate their own sunglasses. If you prefer that your students wear their sunglasses, print the verse on the arms and cut wholes in place of lenses.

Preparing for Next Week

Lesson 45
The Helper
John 20:19-23

Preschool Lesson

He's Alive

Sing: "Oh, How I Love Jesus"

Teach: Last week, we talked about how Jesus died. It was a Friday afternoon and He was nailed to a cross. He was taken from the cross and put into a new cave, one that no one else had ever used. A large stone was rolled across the mouth of the cave to close it.

John does not tell us what happened on the Saturday after Jesus died. But on Sunday, very early in the morning while it was still dark, Jesus' friend Mary Magdalene went to the cave. When she got there, she noticed something. The stone had been moved away from the cave and Jesus was not there! Mary left running! She went to find Peter and John, two of Jesus' disciples. She told them what she had found. She said, "They have taken Jesus and I don't know where they have placed Him."

The disciples went running to see for themselves. Mary went with them. They ran towards the cave. When they were almost there, John ran ahead of Peter and got to the cave first. He stopped outside of the cave and looked in. When Peter arrived, he ran ahead of John and into the cave. They saw the linen fabric that had been used to wrap Jesus' body in. They did not know yet that Jesus had come back to life. Jesus had tried to tell them, but they did not understand. So, the disciples left the garden and went back home.

Mary stayed by the cave and began crying. She missed Jesus. She cried and cried. As she was crying, she leaned over to look into the empty cave but the cave wasn't empty anymore. There were now two angels in the cave, sitting where Jesus' body had been! The angels spoke to her. They asked her why she was crying. Mary told them she was sad because she didn't know where Jesus' body was. But Jesus was right there in the garden! He spoke to Mary. Mary did not know it was Him because He was different somehow. Then Jesus said, "Mary," just as He had done many times before. That is how she knew it was Jesus. He was alive! What a miracle! What excitement! Jesus was not dead any longer. He was alive! She went to the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she told them all that Jesus had said to her. What an amazing story! Jesus had come back to life, just like He said He would.

Pray: Thank you, God, for bringing Jesus back to life!

Activities

- Provide coloring pages and word puzzles that will enhance what you have taught today.
- Provide Easter pages and activities to complement the lesson.
- Make your own hinged Easter Egg! Decorate a paper plate to resemble an Easter egg. Then, cut it in half across the middle. Overlap the outside edges a bit and connect with a brad or paper fastener. The egg can now be opened and closed. Decorate the “inside” by attaching a cross or crown of thorns, etc. to the back side of the bottom part of the egg.
- On manila paper or newsprint, create your own newspaper. Include the headline “The Tomb is Empty!” or “He’s Alive!” Have your students create an illustration and several articles. One article could be from the Roman soldier’s viewpoint while another could be from Mary’s viewpoint. Make sure your students add details from lessons over the past couple of weeks.
- Make an Empty Tomb out of paper plates. Use a large paper plate as well as a small one. Cut off the bottom fourth of the large paper plate and decorate it as a rock with an opening. In the opening, print “He’s Alive!”. Using a brad or paper fastener, attach the small paper plate to the large plate as the rock to be rolled in front of the tomb. Allow students to retell the story using their paper plate tombs.
- Act out the story. Use a large appliance box for the tomb. Decorate with trees and plants. Use robes for clothing and a white sheet for Jesus’ wrappings. Narrate, using the Message version of today’s lesson or have one of your older students tell the story. Be creative!
- Make Easter Egg shaped sugar cookies to represent the tomb where Jesus was laid. Before baking the cookies, use a small, round cookie cutter to remove the opening of the tomb. Allow your students to decorate their own cookie. (If it is not possible for you to bake, use bagels and cream cheese. Cut bagels in half to represent the empty tomb.)
- Boil eggs for snack today. Talk about how eggs represent new life. Prompt your students to think about the new life we have in Jesus.