

Sunday Home Sessions – Spring/Summer 2020

12th April 2020: God's Wonderful Surprise (The Resurrection – Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20)

HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL:

This is designed to be a straightforward session that you can do with your children in about 15mins at home. It will start with a Bible story from *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, and then there will be a suggestion for a simple craft activity and/or an easy game to play. The session rounds off with a suggested prayer you can pray together, and some discussion questions you can use, either at the time or later in the day/week.

Before we go onto the suggested session plan, please have a quick read of the **parents' overview** below. This includes a single-sentence summary of what we are learning (**big idea**) and some **Bible story background**, to help you get familiar with the story we'll be looking at.

PARENTS' OVERVIEW:

Big idea: On the first Easter Sunday, Jesus rose to life again – beginning the process of making everything sad come untrue.

Bible story background: The Jews believed that dead bodies began to rot from the fourth day onwards (which was why they were so loath to open Lazarus's tomb in John 11:39 when Jesus announced He would bring Lazarus back to life). An Old Testament prophecy said that God would not let His holy one see decay (see Acts 2:25-30 for the Apostle Peter's take on this). Sure enough, on the *third* day, Jesus rose again to life. How do we know this to be true? Because of the evidence the Bible gives us:

1. Mary Magdalene and her companions found the tomb open and empty, except for a folded cloth which had been used to cover Jesus' face. They were unlikely to have gone to the wrong tomb as they witnessed His burial on the Friday evening (Mark 15:47). It is also significant that the Bible writers record that it was *women* who were the first witnesses to the Resurrection. In those days, the testimony of a women was inadmissible in court, and so if the writers had wanted to fabricate the story they would certainly have said that *men* were the first on the scene.
2. The women were met by an angelic figure – a messenger from God (that is literally what "angel" means), who reported that Jesus wasn't gone because His body was stolen but because He was no longer dead. The angel reminded the women that Jesus had told them all this would happen ahead of time (Mark 16:6-7).
3. Then Mary actually saw Jesus Himself (John 20:14-18)! She spoke to Him and touched Him. Later in the same chapter, the remaining disciples saw, touched and spoke to the risen Jesus (John 20:19-29). They even watched Him eat (Luke 24:40-43). Later on, the Apostle Paul gives a huge list of people who saw Jesus alive after His death (1 Corinthians 15:1-8).

The rest of the New Testament makes it clear that Jesus' resurrection changes everything for those who trust in Him! 1 Corinthians 15 is particularly clear on this, especially v50-57. Because Jesus was raised, it means that death is not the end. One day we will all be raised with Him, with bodies that can no longer get sick or die (Revelation 21:3-4), to enjoy life with God forever. Everything sad will one day come untrue!

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SESSION IDEAS:

Bible story:

- Read the story, “God’s Wonderful Surprise”, from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* if you have a copy, OR
- Watch an animated reading of the story at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nfnhv5h0k4M>

Craft activity:

If you have a Fruit Corner yoghurt pot you can make a simple Easter garden with empty tomb!

- Eat the yoghurt and clean the pot first!
- Fold up the ‘fruit’ section of the pot at 90 degrees to the rest, to make the empty tomb. You can paint the inside black if you wish. Stick a milk bottle top at the side of the ‘tomb’ to represent the stone rolled away.
- Fill the ‘yoghurt’ section of the pot with compost and plant a couple of little seeds in there (grass or herbs would work best).
- Wait for the plants to grow!

Easter Egg activity:

This activity is simple: if you have an Easter Egg, enjoy eating it together! As you do so, you can use it to help you remember some true things about Easter:

1. The silver or gold foil around the egg reminds us that Easter is about Jesus the King
2. The chocolate egg is like the ground, where Jesus was buried in the tomb after He died
3. When you break open the egg and find it hollow, remember that the women found the tomb empty, because Jesus had risen to life again!
4. As you enjoy how nice the chocolate tastes, think how wonderful it will be living with Jesus forever!

A simple prayer you can pray together with your child:

“Father God,

Thank You so much that Jesus died for us, but He didn’t stay dead! Because He came back to life we know that everyone who trusts in Jesus will come back to life and live forever with Him. Thank You that we can hold onto this hope of an amazing future, even when we’re sad or worried with how things are going now. Amen.”

A couple of simple questions to chat through with your child afterwards:

1. What was strange about the tomb when Mary and her friends went there?
2. What is the most exciting thing about Jesus coming back to life?

If you have extra time:

Why not listen, or even sing along, to the song *He Has Risen*? You can find a video with lyrics here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rr8r8bt8feU>