

Jesus Is Risen

Grades
5-6

SURPRISE

JOHN 20:1-18

What's happening in this story?

This morning begins with confusion: Mary Magdalene arrives in the garden to find the stone moved and the tomb empty! Disciples arrive, then angels, and finally Jesus himself. Out of the confusion, hope emerges, and Mary becomes the first to proclaim the good news that Jesus has risen from the dead!

What does this story mean for kids?

The story of Easter morning ends with Mary running to tell the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" We, too, are called to proclaim the good news. That's the mission of our church bodies—no matter how fancy the words in our mission statement, we are called to proclaim the good news. God is always at work. In this story, kids learn that death and destruction are never the last word. Grace, hope, and joy finish out the story.

Why this theme?

Many kids have already heard this story many times over the years in church and Sunday school. But help them imagine the shock—of Mary and the disciples when they first realized Jesus was resurrected and had defeated death! Help kids grasp that it was *way* more surprising than finding hidden Easter eggs or unwrapping a present in a box. What if Jesus, his face beaming in love for us, walked through the door *right now*? Easter is something like that!

AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids this age are transitioning in their practice of Easter traditions. They're too old for egg hunts and bunnies. Help them understand and appreciate ways the church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus through music, decorations, and sacred traditions.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pens
- Pencils
- Colored pencils

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Magnet
- Paper clips
- Air-dry clay
- Water
- Wildflower seed mix (native to your area)
- Hand wipes
- Compost or potting soil
- Sandwich bags

WHIRL SUPPLIES • **WHIRL KIDS STUDY BIBLES** • **DVD** • **WALL CHART** • **LEAFLETS**

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Have early arrivers bend paper clips into crosses and hide them around the room. Invite later arrivers to search for the crosses—it's an Easter cross hunt! For a fun twist, you could give the searching kids a magnet and see how long it takes to find all of the clips.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

What are some of your favorite Easter traditions? Do any involve surprises? Give kids time to discuss how their families celebrate Easter. **Dyeing Easter eggs is a fun part of Easter, and the tradition got its start with Jesus. A hollowed-out egg is a symbol for Jesus' empty tomb. Today we will hear about what a surprise that empty tomb was to Jesus' friends. The story of Jesus' resurrection is full of surprises.**

Pray together: **Dear God, thanks for raising Jesus from the dead. May we always be excited and surprised that Jesus is risen. Help us share this good news with everyone! Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and pens or pencils.

Some Easter traditions last hundreds of years. Others come and go. Think back to the ways you celebrated Easter when you were little. On your leaflet, write a brief diary entry as though it was seven years ago. What did you enjoy about Easter? Then imagine it's seventeen years from now. Write a diary entry as your future self of how you're celebrating Easter. Invite kids to share their ideas with the group. **What's surprising about the difference between seven years ago and how you imagine seventeen years in the future?**



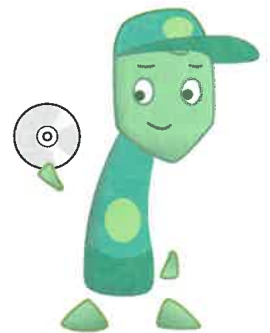
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

In the video today, Mimi is having a hard time moving on from a sad memory. Let's see how a friend helps her understand the good news of Easter!

View Episode 7, "Spring Griever," on the Year Gold Spring Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **What is surprising about how upset Mimi is at the beginning of the video?**
- **When have you been responsible for something you loved dearly? What happened?**
- **How did Gabe comfort Mimi?**
- **In addition to blooming flowers, what are other examples of life coming out of death this time of year?**
- **How would our traditional Easter celebrations be different if Easter didn't occur in spring?**



Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Today's passage is from the book of John. It's in the New Testament in the Gospels and Acts section of the Bible. If this is your first time reading from John, invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1270.



Each of the four gospel writers tells a slightly different version of the resurrection story. Today we are reading John's gospel. The people in John's version are Mary Magdalene, the disciple Simon Peter, and an unnamed disciple. There are also some surprising figures in the tomb where Jesus should be.

Help kids find John 20:1-18 and read it in this creative way together: Invite someone to read verses 1-10. Then ask for someone to narrate verses 11-18, someone to read Mary Magdalene's quotes, someone to read Jesus' quotes, and the rest of the group to read what the angels say.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- How would you describe the reactions Jesus' friends had to the tomb being empty?
- What do you think about someone coming back from the dead? What would it be like to make that discovery?
- Imagine you're Mary Magdalene. How would you respond to angels who said that Jesus was no longer dead?
- Mary Magdalene didn't recognize Jesus right away. Why do you think it was difficult for her to identify her close friend and teacher?
- What is the most surprising aspect of this story for you?

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Surprise*. Easter traditions change, and the parts of the celebration that are important to us may change as we grow up, but the good news never changes. We can be surprised by the good news on Easter and every day. Invite one kid to draw an egg shape in the box by *Surprise*, and another kid to draw a cross inside the egg.



BIBLE BIT

The identity of "the other disciple" (mentioned five times in this story) has been the subject of debate for centuries, though this disciple is often thought to be John the Evangelist.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, pay attention to all of the ways Mimi cared for the hydrangea bush. How can you care for creation during this season of new life?

OUR CHURCH

Find out what your church does with the extra flowers and decorations used at Easter. Consider helping un-decorate the church after the worship festivities conclude.

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out clay, compost/soil, seeds, sandwich bags, and colored pencils.

Tear off leaflet square.

- 1. It's hard for us to comprehend Jesus' resurrection, but Christians have tried over the years to relate it to things we see in the world around us. A caterpillar forms a cocoon and emerges as a butterfly. An empty shell reminds us of the empty tomb. Plants like Mimi's seem to die in the fall and then come back to life in the spring.**
- 2. Look at the growing seedling along the bottom of your leaflet. A seed alone doesn't look like it's alive, but when planted in the right conditions, it can grow into a flower, a vegetable plant, or a tree. It's transformed into something new. When Jesus was buried, he was resurrected into something new. Through his resurrection, we are raised to new life too.**
- 3. We're going to make seed bombs that you can plant later and watch something new and beautiful grow out of something that appears lifeless.**
- 4. Follow the directions on the leaflet. How is the clay and soil of the seed bomb like a tomb for the seeds? Clean hands with wipes when finished.**
- 5. Because we used a wildflower mix, it will be a surprise to see what grows out of your seed bombs. On your leaflet in the space to the right of the seedlings, draw what you think your flowers will look like. What are other ways that can help us understand Jesus' resurrection?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Christians and non-Christians know the resurrection story. It has been a source of inspiration, disagreement, and awe for nearly 2,000 years. It's filled with surprises: an empty tomb, angels, and an unrecognizable Jesus. What surprises did you discover? What questions do you still have?

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pens.

We started the lesson thinking about what we enjoyed about Easter seven years ago and how we may celebrate it seventeen years from now. On the empty tomb, write words or draw pictures that reflect why Easter is important to you today. When you have finished, fold up the panel and put it in your Bible to mark John's Easter story. In future Easters you may find it and reflect on what Easter means for you.

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.