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The Resurrection , Jesus Is Alive!

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10, John 20:1-18

Theme: Jesus rose from the dead , death is defeated!

Jr High (Ages 12-14)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: "The Resurrection, Jesus Is Alive!" (Matthew 28:1, 10 & John 20:1, 18) Hook: Imagine the worst news you've ever heard, someone you loved died, and now you're just left wondering, "What if they were wrong?" That's how the disciples felt when they heard the news about Jesus' burial. But God didn't give up on them, or on us. Through Jesus' empty tomb, He broke the chain of death and gave us hope. This lesson explores why His resurrection isn't just a historical event, but proof that life always has a second chance when we trust Him. Key Points & Life Application: 1. Death is a Tempter's Trap , Jesus didn't just not die; He overcame death by rising on the third day (John 20:9). Death was never supposed to be the final word, but Satan lied that it was. Jesus' resurrection shows that God's power is stronger than our fears. 2. The Disciples' Doubt (and Ours) , Mary Magdalene ran from the tomb scared (John 20:11), and Peter didn't even believe until he saw Jesus (John 20:24, 29). We all struggle with doubt, maybe about our own futures, others' faith, or even God's promises. But Jesus doesn't ask us to believe blindly; He invites us to experience His love through prayer and community. 3. Why It Matters Now , The disciples didn't just get a once-in-a-lifetime miracle; they became witnesses who carried Jesus' message to the world. If we're afraid of death, we're living in fear. But His resurrection teaches us that our identities aren't tied to what we have or lose, they're tied to Him. Who will we share His hope with this week? Closing Challenge: End with a simple, interactive question: "What's one thing death has 'stolen' from you that Jesus can restore?" (e.g., fear, guilt, a broken relationship). Invite students to write down a prayer to ask God to help them trust Him in their own struggles. Why This Works for Junior High: - Relatable Struggles: Death, fear, and doubt feel real to teens, this lesson meets them where they are. - Actionable Hope: They don't just learn about resurrection; they see how to live it out today. - Teamwork: Encourage volunteers to share personal stories (e.g., "I thought my dad's illness meant he'd never get better... but God used it to show me His love."). Encouragement for Volunteers: You're not just teaching facts, you're giving students a reasons to believe. The resurrection isn't just a story; it's the reason we can pray "Lord, make me more like You!" even when life feels heavy. Keep it honest, keep it short, and let the disciples' excitement (Matthew 28:8, 9) inspire yours! Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help

someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

"The Morning After" (A Junior High Bible Story on Easter Sunday, Matthew 28:1-10 & John 20:1-18)

The sky was still dark when Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus' followers, rushed out of the tomb. The stone had already been rolled away, someone had moved it, but no one had left a note. Her heart pounded. She had spent years watching Jesus heal the sick, forgiving sinners, and teaching that God loved everyone. Now, even after His death, she couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong. But as she stepped closer, the empty grave caught her breath.

Inside, the tomb was just as Jesus had predicted, no body, no bloodstains, nothing to explain. Mary's knees almost buckled. She had heard rumors that the Jewish leaders had paid men to lie, but what if it was true? What if He really wasn't there? She turned to leave when, whispers. A voice called from the shadows. "Mary!" It was Jesus, but His face was shimmering like morning mist. His hands were open, His scars still visible. She fell to her knees, crying out, "Teacher!" He laughed softly, as if relieved to see her. "Don't be afraid," He said. "Go tell my disciples I'm alive."

--- Why This Matters Today: Jesus didn't just rise from the dead, He overcame death to show us what real power looks like. For junior high students, this means: Fear isn't the answer. Even when life feels broken, God can turn the worst day into hope. Will you believe, like Mary, that He's alive, even when the world doesn't make sense?

--- Life Application: - Question the Doubters: Some people think faith is blind hope. Jesus' resurrection proves God's promises are real. - Share the News: Like Mary, announce the good news, even if it feels hard. - Face Your Empty Grave: What's your "empty grave" (a broken relationship, fear, etc.)? Jesus promises to meet you there.

--- This story stays true to Scripture while giving teens space to wonder: "Why did God do this? And how does it change me?"

Key Verse

Matthew 28:6 , 'He is not here; He has risen, just as He said.'

The Story of Jesus' Empty Tomb Imagine you've been telling your best friend, "I'll meet you at the park at 3 PM!", but when you get there, they're not there. You check again, and suddenly, there's a big, bright surprise: "They're not here! They're already at the park with me!" That's how the disciples felt when they found Jesus' tomb empty after He died on the cross. Jesus had told His followers He would rise from the dead (like a superhero comeback after losing a fight), and now, because He trusted God, He proved it true! His empty tomb showed that death didn't have the last word over Him. This verse reminds us that God keeps His promises, even when life feels like a mystery. So when doubts creep in (like, "Why did this happen?"), we can trust that God is working for good, and Jesus' victory over death gives us hope for tomorrow. Life application: Even when things feel broken, Jesus is already rising in us, giving us strength to keep believing, like a lifeline when we're feeling lost!

Activities

Activity 1:

1. Set the Scene (3 min):
2. Hand each group a shoebox and ask: "If you were there when Jesus rose, how would you explain it to someone skeptical?"
3. Write down their ideas on the board (e.g., "Disciples were confused!", "Women were scared!").
4. Build the Tomb (7 min):
5. Assign roles (e.g., "Tomb Keeper," "Disciples," "Mary Magdalene"). Each group builds their tomb with the materials.

6. Include a "hidden" clue card (e.g., "The angel said, 'Do not be afraid', write that on your tomb wall!") for them to find.
7. Challenge: How can you show Jesus' empty tomb without a body?
8. Debate & Reflect (5 min):
9. Groups share their tomb designs. Discuss:
10. "Why did the stone roll away?" (John 20:12)
11. "What would you say to someone who doesn't believe?"
12. Life Application: "How can we share the 'empty tomb' of doubt with our friends?"
2. "Faith or Doubt? Mission Impossible"
14. The Mission Briefing (3 min):
15. Explain: "Our 'mission' is to show Jesus rose from the dead, using only what we read in the Bible!"
16. Read aloud 3, 4 Scripture verses (e.g., Matthew 28:6, John 20:18) and have students jot down answers.
17. Solve the Clues (7 min):
18. Groups draw slips of paper with questions (e.g., "Did the disciples see Jesus first?").
19. They work together to find answers in their Bibles. Share answers aloud.
20. Debate Twist: "Some people say the disciples made up the story. How would you respond?"
21. Mission Accomplished? (5 min):
22. Challenge: "Jesus' resurrection isn't just about the past, it's for us now! How does it change how we live?"
23. Connect to real life: "If you're facing doubt, what 'evidence' can you use to trust Jesus?"
24. Why These Work:
25. Empty Tomb Mystery Box: Teaches teamwork and Scripture memory while addressing skepticism.
26. Mission Impossible: Encourages critical thinking and ties resurrection to faith in action.
27. Bonus Tip: End with a prayer, asking God to help students share their faith boldly!

Discussion Questions

- Lesson: "The Resurrection , Jesus Is Alive!"
- (A Time for Wonder, Doubt, and Wondering How This Changes Everything)
- Setting the Stage:
 - "Imagine you're sitting with a group of friends after school, scrolling through videos, laughing over jokes, or even arguing about who's right. Life feels like a mix of fun, struggles, and maybe some big unanswered questions, like, 'What happens when something terrible happens?' Today, we're not just talking about a story from the Bible 2,000 years ago. We're talking about something that changes everything, and we're going to explore why that matters to us now. Let's dive in!"
 - 1. "If You Had to Explain Why Jesus Rose Again, How Would You Say It? (Without Citing Bible Verses First)"
 - Context: "You might think this is just a cool myth, a legend, or even a 'what-if' story. But what if Jesus' resurrection isn't just a historical event, what if it's the biggest proof we've ever had that God isn't just sitting back and watching, but actively involved in fixing broken things? If you had to explain this to someone skeptical, how would you start? Where do you even begin?"
- Life Application:
 - "This question isn't about memorizing facts, it's about believing them. How does it make you feel to think God isn't distant? And how could that change how you handle fear or hardship? For example, if you're scared of something big happening to you, how might knowing Jesus rose from the dead give you a new kind of courage?"

- 2. "Mary Magdalene: The Woman Who Met the Risen Jesus (John 20:11-18). What Would You Have Done If You'd Seen Him First?"
 - Context: "Mary Magdalene was one of the first people to see Jesus alive after the cross. Some of us might feel like we've 'failed', like we don't 'get' the faith part, or like we're too slow to believe. But what if Jesus doesn't call us to be perfect, just to trust? If you'd been there, what would have stopped you from running to him? Was it shame? Doubt? Or something else?"
 - Life Application:
 - "Mary's story is a reminder that God doesn't judge us by how quickly we believe. He meets us where we are. For instance, if you've ever felt guilty for not 'living the faith' perfectly, how could this story encourage you to see yourself differently? What's one small step you could take today to 'run' toward something that matters, even if it's scary?"
- 3. "Why Does a Risen Jesus Change How We Handle 'Death', Even When It's Not Our Time?"
 - Context: "Jesus' resurrection isn't just about him being alive now, it's about the power he gives us over death. When we hear 'death,' we might think of funerals, loss, or even our own mortality. But what if that fear isn't the last word? If Jesus rose, what would that mean for how we talk about or prepare for the toughest thing we'll ever face?"
 - Life Application:
 - "This is a heavy question, but it's also a hopeful one. For example, if a friend is grieving, how could you show them Jesus isn't finished with their story? Or if you're scared of aging or sickness, what's one way you could 'practice' trusting God with something small today?"
- 4. "If You Could Ask Jesus One Question After He Rose, What Would It Be, and Why?"
 - Context: "The disciples didn't understand everything right away. They were confused, scared, and even doubted. But Jesus didn't make them wait forever to answer. If you could ask Jesus a question after he rose, about faith, doubt, or even about the future, what would it be? And why does that matter?"
 - Life Application:
 - "This question isn't about 'getting all the answers', it's about wanting them. For example, if you've ever felt lost in your faith, what's one question you've been too afraid to ask? How might Jesus' resurrection show you that he knows your questions, even if you can't answer them yet?"
 - Closing Thought:
 - "Today, we didn't just talk about a story, we talked about why it matters to us. The resurrection isn't just proof of God's power; it's proof that he's ours. And that's something worth wondering about, arguing about, and believing about, even if it doesn't always feel real yet."
 - Why These Work:
 - Engaging: Open-ended to spark creativity and debate.
 - Honest: Addresses real doubts, fears, and misunderstandings.
 - Life-Connected: Links the story to today's struggles (doubt, fear, loss, doubt).
 - Faith-Building: Encourages trust and curiosity without pressure.

Prayer Focus

Teacher's Prayer for Junior High Students , "Jesus Is Alive!" "Heavenly Father, we come before You today with hearts full of wonder, because something amazing happened two thousand years ago! Jesus didn't stay in the grave like we sometimes worry He might. Instead, He rose from the dead, breaking the power of death and giving us hope for life now, and forever! Lord, help us believe, even when our minds feel a little fuzzy. Teach us to trust

that Your promises aren't just for the future... but for today. Give us courage to share this news with friends who might be struggling, just like the disciples did, because when we point to Jesus, we're pointing to the only one who truly loves us, even when we're afraid. Amen." --- Why this works for this age: - Relatable tension: Acknowledges their own doubts or worries ("like we sometimes worry He might"). - Hope for now: Connects the resurrection to daily life ("giving us hope for life now"). - Practical call to action: Ends with sharing hope, a real-life skill for teens. - Honest language: Uses simple, conversational phrasing, no fluff. Bonus Tip: Pause after each line to let students respond with their own struggles or joys!

>> Missions Spotlight

Easter is celebrated on every continent. In Kenya, entire villages gather at sunrise to celebrate the risen Christ. In China, underground churches risk everything to meet on Easter morning. The resurrection is the heartbeat of the global church.

-> To the Cross

The cross was not the end. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead! The cross paid for our sin. The resurrection proves God accepted that payment. Because Jesus lives, we will live too. Death is defeated. The grave has no power.