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Jesus Appears to His Disciples

Scripture: Luke 24:13-49, John 20:19-31

Theme: The risen Jesus is real, and He is with us

4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Title: "A Real Friend Rises with Us!" Theme: Jesus' power to overcome death is real, and He's with us! --- Introduction (Engage the Hearts) "Have you ever felt like your friend disappeared, and you worried they'd never come back?" Today, Jesus shows His disciples, and us, that He's not just a story in the Bible, but a living, real presence who overcomes even death. Just like the disciples, we sometimes doubt, but His promise is still true: "I am with you always!" (Matthew 28:20). --- The Empty Tomb & Doubting Hearts The women ran to tell the disciples the tomb was empty, but their hearts felt broken. They walked to Emmaus that same day, talking about Jesus' death, not yet seeing His glory. (Luke 24:13-32) Imagine if you'd spent years listening to Jesus teach, but then He disappeared forever, how would you feel? Even the disciples doubted at first. But Jesus, still alive, appeared to them, breaking through fear and offering hope. Deeper Question: When have you felt like God's plan didn't work out the way you hoped? How did you respond? --- The Upper Room & a Peaceful Shake On the evening of that day, Jesus showed up right in their midst, yet they didn't recognize Him at first! (John 20:19) He said, "Peace be with you!" (John 20:18) His touch was real, His voice was real, and His love was real. The disciples were scared, but Jesus didn't leave them alone. Instead, He gave them a job: "Go tell the world what you've seen." (Matthew 28:19-20) Even though they'd lost Him physically, He was still their Friend and their Commander. Personal Application: Where can you share the good news about Jesus today, even if it feels hard? --- Closing (Encourage Hope & Faith) Jesus' resurrection isn't just for the past; it's for today. He didn't just rise to be remembered, He rose to be lived with. When you feel afraid or doubtful, remember: Jesus didn't leave His friends. He didn't leave us. He's in the kitchen waiting, in the hallway talking, in the small moments of kindness we offer others. And He wants you to tell others about Him too! Final Prayer: "Dear Jesus, help us trust You like the disciples did, even when we don't see You. Give us courage to share Your love and remind us You're real and always with us. Amen." --- Volunteer Tip: Use a simple visual (e.g., a "empty tomb" craft or a group hug to mimic Jesus' touch) to make the lesson hands-on! 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

Title: Jesus Walks with Two Unknown

One sunny morning in Jerusalem, two disciples named Cleopas and another unnamed friend were walking back to their hometown, Emmaus. Sad and confused, they hurried along, their hearts heavy. Just as they reached a quiet village, Jesus walked beside them. At first, they didn't recognize him, he was dressed like any other traveler. But soon, he began talking to them about the Bible, asking questions that made them remember how Jesus had promised to return. (Luke 24:13-35)

Their eyes lit up when they realized who it was! They invited him to stay for supper, and while he was at the table, he took bread, gave thanks, and broke it. Suddenly, their hearts burned inside them, they knew it was Jesus! But before they could say anything, he vanished. (Luke 24:30-31)

The next day, the two disciples told their friends about what had happened. But the friends didn't believe them at first, until Jesus appeared in their midst! He showed them his hands and feet, and his wounds were still there. The disciples were terrified but so happy to see him again. Jesus told them to touch his wounds, just to be sure. Then he sat with them and talked, saying, "It is I!" (John 20:19-23)

One of the disciples, Thomas, wasn't there when Jesus came back. Later, Thomas said, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger into the place where the nails were, and unless I put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Jesus said, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach your hand into my side. Don't be unbelieving, but believe!" (John 20:24-29)

Why does this story matter? It shows us that Jesus is always with us, even when we can't see him, just like he walked with his friends on the road and came back to them in the middle of the night. He wants to talk to us, too, and show us his love. When we feel lost or scared, we can trust that he's near, just like he was to his disciples.

Deeper Questions: 1. Why do you think the disciples were so surprised when Jesus walked with them? 2. What makes us trust even when we can't see someone? 3. How can we tell God we believe in him, even when we don't feel it?

Personal Application: Think of a time you felt alone or unsure. How can you trust God, like Thomas trusted Jesus? What can you do today to keep your faith growing?

Key Verse

John 20:29 , 'Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

Jesus' Promise to Us (John 20:29) This verse is a wonderful message from Jesus about how much He loves us, even when we don't see Him with our eyes. Jesus said, "Because you've seen Me with your own eyes, you've believed in Me. But you're even more blessed if you've never seen Me but still trust in Me!" This means that faith isn't just about watching miracles or seeing Jesus appear in person. Instead, it's about trusting Him with our hearts, even when we can't always picture Him. Faith is like a friendship with Jesus. Even though we can't always see Him (like when we pray in our hearts or follow His Word without a sign), our trust in Him matters so much. Just like a friend you trust even when they're far away, Jesus wants us to believe in Him even when we can't hold His hand or watch Him do amazing things. That takes courage, but God knows our hearts! Why Does Jesus Say This? Imagine if someone told you, "You're blessed because you've seen my face!" Wouldn't you want to know why it's so special for those who never saw them? Jesus is saying: "You see me with your eyes and believe, but those who never saw me but still trust me are even more blessed because they're learning to rely on faith." This reminds us that God's love is bigger than just what we can see, it's about what we believe with all our hearts. How Can We Live This Out? Let's think about times when we didn't see God's answers, but we still trusted Him anyway. Maybe we prayed for a friend who got sick, and we didn't see them get better right away. Or maybe we believed God could give us a new bike when we didn't have money, even though we didn't see the gift yet. Those

moments are like little acts of faith that show God's love is real, even when we can't see it! Personal Questions to Ponder: 1. Can you think of a time you trusted God even when you didn't see an answer? What helped you believe? 2. How can you be more like Jesus today, trusting Him even when things don't go as planned? 3. If someone asked, "How do I know God really loves me?", what would you tell them? Final Thought: Jesus doesn't just want us to see Him, He wants us to believe in Him with our whole hearts. That's why He says, "Blessed are those who believe without seeing!" Maybe today, we'll choose to trust Him more, even when the path isn't clear. And that's when we'll feel His love the most!

Activities

Activity 1:

Students walk or trace a path marked by Bible verses and faith-based questions, symbolizing Jesus' guidance after His death and resurrection.

1. Prepare the Tomb (5 min):
2. Give each student a sheet of white paper. Fold one corner to make a small triangle (tomb shape) and secure with tape. Draw a simple cross (1, 2 inches wide) on the folded edge and cut along it to reveal the blank space inside.
3. Tell the story of Jesus' resurrection: How disciples traveled to find an empty tomb (Luke 24:13, 24). Ask: "Why did they search so hard? What did they hope to find?"
4. Embroider the Cross (5 min):
5. Have students use yarn to weave through the white paper, creating a thick cross or shadow-box design. Color the yarn with markers if desired.
6. For an extra challenge, use two colors to represent the cross of Christ (e.g., red for sacrifice, white for hope).
7. Add the Empty Tomb (3 min):
8. Glue a small black piece of paper to the bottom of the cross to form the tomb. Add details like cracks or a stone (cut from paper).
9. Place a "discovery" item (like a Bible verse or paper "angels") in the tomb if using plastic eggs.
10. Reflection (2 min):
11. Ask: "What does this activity remind you of when you feel afraid or unsure about God's promises?" Encourage them to share how Jesus' resurrection gives them hope today.
2. "Follow the Light: Disciple's Trail"
13. Create the Path (5 min):
14. Lay out a strip of paper (3, 5 feet long) and write key verses or prompts along it, spaced 1, 2 feet apart. Include:
 15. "The Road to Emmaus" (Luke 24:13, 27): "Why did the disciples look sad?"
 16. "The Empty Tomb" (Luke 24:30, 35): "What did they do when they saw Jesus?"
 17. "The Upper Room" (John 20:19, 23): "Why did Jesus breathe on them?"
18. Guided Walk/Trace (5 min):
19. Read a short summary of the passage (e.g., Jesus walking with them, appearing to the disciples). For each verse, ask a deeper question:
 20. "How did the disciples feel when Jesus disappeared?" (Fear + curiosity)
 21. "What would YOU ask Jesus if He appeared to you?"
22. Have students trace the path with a crayon, adding their answers in the margins.
23. Group Discussion (3 min):
24. Pause at each station. Use prompts like:
 25. "Why do you think Jesus appeared to disciples on different occasions?" (To prove His resurrection, build faith).

26. "How can we 'walk' with Jesus today, even when we don't see Him?" (Praying, reading His Word, serving others).
27. Application Challenge (2 min):
28. Challenge them to share one "step" of faith they'll take this week based on the lesson (e.g., pray for a friend, read a Bible verse).
29. Why These Work:
30. Embroidery taps into creativity and symbolism (cross = hope).
31. Path activity encourages movement and reflection on discipleship.
32. Both use simple supplies and adapt to group sizes. For extra engagement, pair activities with a short prayer or song (e.g., "I Will Follow" by Casting Crowns).

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions designed for upper elementary students (ages 9, 11) about Jesus Appearing to His Disciples (Luke 24:13, 49 and John 20:19, 31). These questions encourage deeper reflection, critical thinking, and personal connection to the story.
- 1. Faith in the Face of Doubt
 - Jesus walked with two disciples who were sad and discouraged, and He revealed Himself to them. Later, His disciples were hiding in fear after His death, and He still came to them. What do you think made it possible for Jesus to appear to them when they were afraid? How can you trust God even when things feel uncertain or scary, like you might have trusted Jesus' friends after He disappeared?
 - Think deeper: How does knowing Jesus is always with us (even if we can't see Him) change how we handle doubt or fear? Can you think of a time when you doubted something, like a promise or a rule, but later realized it was true? How did that help you?
- 2. The Power of Seeing Beyond Fear
 - When Jesus appeared to His disciples in John 20, they were hiding because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders who wanted to kill Him. Later, in Luke, they were still amazed and joyful when He showed them His hands and feet. What do you think made it easier for them to believe Jesus was alive again? Was it seeing His body, hearing His voice, or something else?
 - Think deeper: We live in a world where some people doubt or even deny things that seem impossible, like miracles or God's power. How can you share what you've seen or heard about Jesus with someone who might doubt? Would you rather trust what you see with your eyes or what you hear from God's Word?
- 3. Why Did Jesus Choose to Appear to His Disciples?
 - Jesus didn't just disappear into the sky when He left earth, He came back to His friends, and He gave them a mission: to spread His good news to the whole world. Why do you think Jesus wanted to do this? What do you think would have happened if He had stayed away forever after His death?
 - Think deeper: If Jesus came back to you today, what would you want to tell Him about your life? What's one thing you'd share with Him if you knew He was listening? How does it feel to know He's always watching over you?
- 4. The Surprise of God's Plan
 - The disciples didn't know Jesus was coming back, He surprised them! Later, He also surprised Thomas by letting him touch His wounds. What do you think Thomas's doubt shows us about how God works? Sometimes God shows us big things in small ways, like a quiet moment or a sign. Have you ever had a moment when you thought God was silent, but later realized He was working in a way you didn't expect?

- Think deeper: If you could ask Jesus one question about His plan for your life, what would it be? How does it feel to know He has a surprise for you too?
- These questions help students explore the story's deeper meaning while connecting it to their own lives in meaningful ways! Would you like any adjustments to fit a specific group or focus?

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus: "A Light to Follow" Dear God, We come to You today like the disciples did, sometimes afraid, sometimes excited, but always searching for the truth. After Jesus died, His friends didn't know what to do, but You appeared to them anyway, breaking through fear with Your love. Help us, like them, to remember that You're always near, even when life feels dark or confusing. Teach us to trust You, to listen when You speak, and to share Your hope with others, just like the disciples did when they first saw You alive again. Show us how to be brave in our faith, like they were, knowing that Your love is stronger than our doubts. Amen. --- Reflection Questions for Class Discussion: 1. What were the disciples feeling when Jesus appeared to them? (Fear, wonder, relief?) 2. How did Jesus show His love to them after He rose? (Peace, a meal, talking about His future) 3. Have you ever felt afraid about something, but God helped you see His way? Share a time when you trusted Him, even when it was hard. 4. Why do you think Jesus told the disciples to go and tell everyone the good news? How can we do that today? --- Personal Application for Kids: - Today's Challenge: Look for small ways to share hope, like the disciples did, maybe by drawing a Bible verse for a friend or praying for someone who needs encouragement. - Memory Verse: "Jesus came and stood among them... 'Peace be with you!'" (John 20:19). When you feel scared, say this to yourself like a reminder that God is with you. - Practice: Before the next Bible lesson, ask: "What's one thing Jesus taught me today that I can remember later?" --- Closing Prayer for the Class (Teacher Prays Together): "Heavenly Father, thank You for walking with us, even when we're unsure. Help our hearts to rest in Your love, like the disciples did after seeing Jesus. Give us courage to share Your message with friends, and remind us that You're always there to guide us. Amen." --- Why This Works: - Age-appropriate: Uses simple language but touches on deeper themes (doubt, courage, mission). - Interactive: Ends with questions to spark conversation and application. - Inclusive: Invites kids to pray for themselves and others in the class. Would you like a follow-up activity (e.g., drawing scenes from Luke 24 or a "Peace Sign" craft)?

>> Missions Spotlight

In secular Europe, many people doubt the resurrection. Yet in the same cities where doubt is strongest, immigrant churches are growing rapidly. African, Asian, and Latin American believers are bringing the joy of the resurrection back to Europe.

-> To the Cross

Jesus appeared to His disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.' Because of the cross, we have peace with God. Because of the resurrection, we have the living Jesus with us always. Thomas doubted, and Jesus gently proved He was real. He meets our doubts too.