

March 31, 2024

Bible Passage: John 20:1–18
(Death/Resurrection)



Jesus Is Alive

Remember Verse

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

LESSON OVERVIEW

CONNECT//
10 minutes



Sentence Stems

SUPPLIES

- Sentence Stems*

GATHER//
30 minutes



Remember Verse

Game: Good News Shout

SUPPLIES

- None

Storytelling

SUPPLIES

- Optional: Storytelling video*, Investigate Questions*
- Images: Family Tree, Disciples, Map of Israel and Judah, Cross*
- People cutouts*
- Bibles
- Items from nature (e.g., flowers, sticks, leaves, rocks)



- Baby doll
- Scissors
- Paper lunch bags (3)
- Oats or grains (2 c.)
- Cotton balls (1 bag)
- Coins (10-20)
- Box (about 2' x 2')



Discussion Questions

RESPOND//
15 minutes



Full of Life

SUPPLIES

- Plastic eggs (1 per child)
- Permanent markers (various colors)
- Upbeat worship music (suggestion: "Celebrate," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

(Optional) The Big God
Story Dioramas

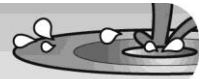
SUPPLIES

- Shoe boxes (or other small boxes, 1 box for every 3–

4 children)

- Misc. craft supplies (e.g., fabric, craft sticks, disposable plates, cups, utensils, tissue paper, string)
- Glue or tape

BLESS//
5 minutes



SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards*
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 5*
- Bible

Further Resources

To help you plan and lead:

**Customizable copy of Lesson 4
2018–19 Scope and Sequence
TruStory How It Works
Small Group Enhancement**

At Home Weekly: Lesson 4

The weekly for the next lesson—to be sent home for preteaching by parents—is found in BLESS.

LEADER PREP

Each week you'll find a list of resources along with encouraging articles that help you prepare your heart to present the lesson.

Inspire *Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

Last summer, I went to a conference that centered on hearing God's voice and communicating what He was saying to one another. This created such a wonderful atmosphere. I was standing in line for a taco at lunch and someone came up to me and said, "Are you a singer? I was just sensing God saying that you are a singer and that you are going to write songs that usher people into the presence of God." My smile stretched ear to ear as I said, "How did you know? That is so fun!"

This atmosphere of hearing God's voice all week long contributed to such a swelling of faith in my heart. As I heard Jesus speaking to me so many times through so many different people, I was overcome with how *alive* Jesus is! I pulled out my phone and posted on Facebook, "God is so REAL!"

Jesus is always alive, but there are certain times in our lives when we are more aware of His presence and activity. For me, the conference was one of those times. Often, Easter is one of those times too. As we gather together and celebrate the resurrection, there is something powerful in our remembrance. The same Jesus who rose from the grave is alive in us today. Now that's a reason for exclamation!

Kelly Goddard
HRock Church

Equip *Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

God has been working out His plan of redemption since the very beginning of The Big God Story. And God chose to use covenants as the mechanism through which He would redeem the world back to Himself.

Throughout The Big God Story, God entered into covenants with mankind in order to establish relationships with people and to reveal His plans for dealing with humanity's sin by sending a Redeemer. The four main (redemptive) covenants are the Abrahamic, Davidic, Mosaic, and New covenants.

In the Abrahamic Covenant, God promised blessing to the world (the promise of a Redeemer) and chose Israel to be the channel of that blessing. God then gave the terms by which His people, Israel, would be able to experience that blessing: through obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. Later, God clarified this initial promise made to Abraham by giving the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant gave people a better, fuller understanding of what the coming king (Messiah) would be like.

Through the prophets, God promised a New Covenant that would once and for all take care of the problem of sin. Through the New Covenant, God would enable His people to obey His Law through the inner promptings of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, this marked the climax of The Big God Story. The cross is the embodiment of the blessing God promised to Israel—to bless them and to bless the world through them. Jesus is the promise. He is the promise God gave to Adam and Eve in the garden (Genesis 3:15). He is the promise God gave to Abraham and the prophets through the covenants. When we proclaim, "Jesus is alive," we are seeing the fulfillment of thousands of years of promise.

Support *Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word*

When was a time in your life that you were truly aware that Jesus is *alive*? Spend a few minutes journaling, writing a poem, or sharing with a friend about that experience. Allow yourself to drift back and immerse yourself in the memory.

Remembering is so important. That is part of why we remember the resurrection together each year on Easter. We allow ourselves to soak in the reality that Jesus is alive. As you prepare to teach this week, recall the resurrection by reading John 20:1–18 slowly. Place yourself in this part of The Big God Story and allow yourself to celebrate with the individuals who encountered our living God.

Then, spend some time responding to God. Pray, dance, go for a walk ... do something to celebrate the fact that Jesus is alive! Then trust Him to be present with you and minister through you to your students this week. He is risen!

CONNECT//10 minutes



Children develop relationships with their leaders and one another through simple activities and conversation starters.

Sentence Stems

Using prompts, kids will finish sentences with their own unique answers.

SUPPLIES

- Sentence Stems (see Resources)

PREPARE AHEAD

Print one Sentence Stems resource for every two or three children.

RELATE

CONNECT QUESTION: Welcome and greet students. Open your time by asking this question: **What is your favorite book? Why?**

God loves every one of us—and He created us to be unique! He gives each of us a unique role to play in The Big God Story. Let's get to know our friends even better through this fun game. Invite the kids to form groups of two or three. Hand a copy of the Sentence Stems to each group. Encourage the kids in each group to read the "sentence stems," and then allow each member of the group to finish the sentence with his own answer.

- One cool thing about my family is ...
- Something I liked most about this past year was ...
- My favorite thing to do on the weekend is ...
- The best vacation I ever went on was ...
- One thing that makes me happy is ...
- One thing I really dislike is ...

After several minutes, ask all the kids to come back together. Invite each group to share the most outrageous or interesting answer from their discussion.

Developmentally Speaking

Fifth and sixth graders can engage in a wide range of collaborative discussions—one on one, in groups, and with different partners. Capitalize on this developmental ability by grouping different kids each week during CONNECT. You might also allow more time for discussion so that children can exercise their newly developed conversation skills.

GATHER//30 minutes



Children experience and learn more about God through prayer, storytelling from The Big God Story, an investigation into God's Word, and creative ways to memorize Scripture.

Remember Verse

Each week children will spend time memorizing a portion of Scripture together. The Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

Game: Good News Shout

SUPPLIES

- None

RELATE

Have your group stand and repeat each phrase of the Remember Verse as you say it. Each time you complete the verse and reference, shout, "That's good news!" Have the kids join you as you shout. Repeat the verse and shout a few times.

Now ask the children to form two lines facing each other. Have the kids in one line say the verse together from memory, followed by both lines shouting in unison, "That's good news!" Then have the kids in the other line say the verse together, again followed by both lines shouting, "That's good news!" You might have the lines do the shout at different volumes, such as whispering or in a normal voice. Keep playing until everyone knows the verse.



Storytelling

Bible Passage: John 20:1–18

Storytelling Technique: Sensory Experiences with Tangible Items

Jesus Is Alive

SUPPLIES

- Optional: Storytelling video (see Resources), Investigate Questions (see Resources)
- Images: Family Tree, Disciples, Map of Israel and Judah, Cross (see Resources)
- People cutouts (see Resources)
- Bibles Items from nature (e.g., flowers, sticks, leaves, rocks) 
- Baby doll
- Scissors
- Paper lunch bags (3)
- Oats or grains (2 c.) 
- Cotton balls (1 bag)
- Coins (10 to 20)
- Box (about 2' x 2')

PREPARE AHEAD

Print the images. Also print six copies of the People cutouts and cut them out (so you have 12 total people). Fill one paper bag with oats or grains, another bag with the cotton balls, and one bag with the coins. Place these bags, along with the rest of the supplies, inside the box.

RELATE

Invite the kids to join you in a circle. **I am so thankful for this special day to be together and celebrate that Jesus is alive. Let's pray and ask God to help us understand what He wants to teach us today.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

A lot happened in The Big God Story before Jesus was born. Invite children to open their Bibles to Genesis. Read Genesis 1:1. **The Bible tells us that, in the beginning, God created the heavens, the earth, the rivers, the oceans, the animals, and the first man and woman: Adam and Eve.** Pass around the items from nature. Invite the kids to observe them, smell them, and feel their different textures. Invite them to comment on what they see, feel, and smell. Ask them what all these pieces of creation tell them about God.

God created the first people to be in relationship with Him and to live in a beautiful garden with all the animals. Sadly, Adam and Eve sinned, which broke their close relationship with God and forced them to leave the garden. But God promised that one day a Redeemer would come to restore the relationship between people and God. This promised Redeemer would be the way for all people to be with God forever and ever. He would bring salvation for all people. No one knew it yet, but the promised Redeemer would be Jesus! We celebrate today that Jesus is alive, and because He lives, we can be saved! But it would be many years before Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. So, people began to wait for God to fulfill the promise. Invite the kids to be silent for 10 or 15 seconds, as if they're also "waiting."

Only a short time passed before the people of the world became evil. They chose to ignore God's words, and

they hurt themselves and others. Something had to be done, so God sent a flood to the earth. But one righteous man remained: Noah. God, in His mercy, saved Noah and his family. Invite the kids to make “rain” sounds with their mouths and bodies by snapping their fingers, stomping their feet on the floor, and making “shushing” sounds. It rained for 40 days and 40 nights. When the rain stopped, God promised Noah that He would never destroy life on earth with a flood again. Through Noah, God’s promise stayed alive, and the people kept on waiting for the Redeemer to come.

After this, Noah had many children and filled the earth with people. One of the people from Noah’s family was a man named Abraham. God made a covenant, or an everlasting promise, with Abraham. Read Genesis 17:3–6 aloud. God told Abraham that the nation of Israel would come from his family tree. God also told Abraham that the promised Redeemer would be part of his family tree. Show the kids the Family Tree image. You might explain what a “family tree” is and what the branches and trunk represent on the tree. Abraham and his wife, Sarah, waited years for God to fulfill His promise to send them a child, and God kept that promise by sending them a son named Isaac. Through Abraham and his family, God’s promise stayed alive, and the people kept on waiting for the Redeemer to come. Pass around the baby doll. Invite the kids to comment on what it might have been like for Abraham and Sarah to wait so long to have a baby.

Isaac grew up and had a son named Jacob. And Jacob had 12 sons. Pass out the People cutouts; invite the kids to line them up, from one to 12, in the middle of the circle. Comment on what a large family that was. One of Jacob’s sons, Joseph, was sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt. But God always stayed with him. God raised Joseph up in power under the king of Egypt. Because of his position, Joseph stored up food. And during a time with little food, many Israelites, including Jacob’s entire family, came to Egypt to buy grain. Pass around the bag of oats or grains; invite the kids to feel the grain in the bag. Ask them what the grain feels like and what they think it would taste like. God used Joseph to provide food for Jacob’s family and save them during the famine. Through Joseph, God’s promise stayed alive.

Years after Joseph died, the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites. The people cried out to God for help. God chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land where they could worship God. God made a covenant with Moses and His people. He also gave them rules for how to live their lives.

But because the Israelites didn’t trust God to help them conquer the land, they spent 40 years wandering in the desert. Through the time of wandering, God’s promise of the Redeemer remained.

After the Israelites’ time of wandering, the Lord God chose a new leader named Joshua. After His people had battled for many years, God conquered the land He’d set aside for them. He put in place leaders called judges. For 450 years God’s people lived in cycles of obedience to God and then rebellion against Him. Through good times and bad, God’s promise stayed alive, and the people kept on waiting for the Redeemer to come.

God’s people wanted a king. So, God gave them a king: Saul. Saul was the first king, but God rejected him because of his pride and disobedience. Then God anointed David as the second king. David was a humble shepherd who loved God. Pass around the cotton balls; explain to the kids that these represent the wool on David’s sheep. David’s son, Solomon, became the last king of the united 12 tribes of Israel.

During the reign of Solomon’s son, God allowed rebellion to happen, and the nation split in two. The line of the promised Redeemer now followed the tribe of Judah in the south. Show the kids the Map of Judah and Israel image; point to Judah in the south. Judah had some evil kings who led the people into great sin, and it also had some good kings, but because the people kept disobeying God, God allowed the Babylonian Empire to capture them. Soon the city of Jerusalem, the home of God’s people, was completely destroyed.

But faith stayed alive, even in Babylon. Eventually Babylon fell to the Persian Empire, and Esther—an Israelite—became the queen of Persia. God used Esther to save His people from death. Turn to Esther 4:14 and have the children do the same. Once everyone has found the verse, read Esther 4:14 aloud. Those were words spoken to Esther, and through the time of exile, God’s promise stayed alive and the people kept on waiting for the Redeemer to come. Years later, the king of Persia paid for Nehemiah to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and its walls. Pass around the bag full of coins; invite the kids to feel the coins and hear them clink together.

At this point in The Big God Story, something strange happened: God was silent. He was still working and moving in the lives of His people, but He chose not to speak to them through a prophet, priest, king, or judge. We don’t have any biblical record of His words. Through the silence, God’s promise stayed alive, and the people kept on waiting for the Redeemer to come. Nearly 400 years passed before God spoke again. Again, invite the kids to be silent for 10 to 15 seconds, as if they’re waiting.

Then, in the first pages of Matthew and Luke, we read that the promise God made in the garden of Eden

remained alive throughout the passing of time! The moment that had been promised so long ago in the garden of Eden finally happened in a small town called Bethlehem. Jesus was born! The awaited Messiah was finally on earth!

Jesus grew up and led a perfect life. He never sinned. He never did anything wrong. Then, when he was 30 years old, Jesus began His ministry. He called 12 disciples and taught them who He was and everything else they needed to know to spread His good news around the world. Jesus cared for the poor, healed the sick, raised the dead, and saved the outcasts.

Show the kids the Disciples image. Point out what they're doing through Jesus' power: caring, healing, raising the dead, and saving the outcasts. **Jesus taught people the very best way to live—God's way.**

God's Son, Jesus, came to earth to pay the price for our sins. He died on the cross so we could be in relationship with God again. Hold up the Cross image; pass it around the circle. **But today is not a day of sadness. Today we celebrate the empty tomb! Because three days after Jesus died, Jesus' friends went to the tomb where He'd been placed, and it was empty!** Turn to John 20:11–16 and have the children do the same. Once everyone has found the verses, read them aloud. **Mary was one of Jesus' friends, and she had seen Jesus teach and heal the sick and perform many miracles, and she had also watched as He was put to death on the cross. Can you imagine all the things she was feeling when she found that Jesus wasn't in the tomb? Then she heard Him call her name: "Mary." And she knew that Jesus was alive! Today, we celebrate that truth. Jesus is alive!** Lead the kids in a big cheer, clapping and shouting.

Death couldn't hold Jesus! Jesus is alive! He conquered death, went to heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live lives of faith with God. Today, the Holy Spirit continues to work in each of our lives, allowing us to be a part of Jesus' story until He returns.

One day Jesus will return in victory to announce He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Those who love God and have accepted His Son, Jesus, will live in heaven forever in relationship with God ... the way it all began in the Garden of Eden. The way it should be. And from that day on, and for all of eternity, we will be with the promised Lord and Redeemer forever and ever. Jesus is alive! Amen! End this time with a personal story about how you know that Jesus is alive in your life.

Discussion Questions

- Who is the Redeemer? Why did God promise to send Him?
- Why did the first people leave the garden? What did sin do to the relationship between God and people?
- Who were Abraham, Joseph, David, and Esther? How did God use them in His story?
- How does it make you feel to know Jesus is alive?
- What was one part of The Big God Story that surprised you or made you happy?
- In what ways God has shown love to you or to people you know?

RESPOND//15 minutes

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond to God through creative activities and games.

Full of Life

Students will listen to worship music as they respond to God through drawing.

SUPPLIES

- Plastic eggs (1 per child)
- Permanent markers (various colors)
- Upbeat worship music (suggestion: "Celebrate," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

RELATE

Invite the children to join you in a circle. Give each child an egg and a permanent marker. **From the beginning of The Big God Story, God planned to send Jesus—the Redeemer—to restore the relationship between God and people that had been broken by sin. Jesus gave us the way to be in relationship with God. Today we celebrate**

that the tomb was empty! Jesus, our Redeemer, is alive!

Hold up an empty plastic egg. **Some of you might get eggs today filled with candy or presents. But this is a special egg. I want to invite you to purposely leave this egg empty today to remind you of the empty tomb. Because Jesus is alive, we have so much to celebrate today. What do you want to celebrate today?**

Invite the kids to spend a minute pondering this question. Let them know that you're going to turn on the music, and they will have a chance to draw on their eggs. Explain that there is no right or wrong way to draw. Invite them to simply listen to the words of the music and draw or write about what it means to them to celebrate that Jesus is alive.

After the song ends, ask the children to talk about what they drew or wrote and what they're celebrating today. Talk with the kids about how today we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead. This is the biggest event that has ever happened! Jesus died for their sins and rose again so they could have a relationship with God forever!

(Optional) The Big God Story Dioramas

Invite the kids to recreate a scene from The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES

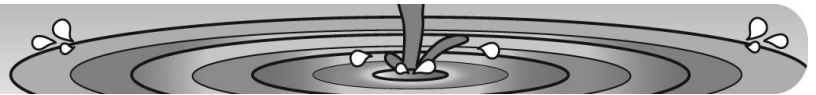
- Shoe boxes (or other small boxes, 1 box for every 3–4 children)
- Misc. craft supplies (e.g., fabric, craft sticks, disposable plates, cups, utensils, tissue paper, string)
- Glue or tape

RELATE

Today is Easter, which means it's a very special day. On Easter, we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus—our Redeemer. God promised to send Jesus since the very beginning of The Big God Story, and we got to hear The Big God Story from beginning to end. We heard how God wove all the separate stories together into one big story—a story that He wrote and continues to write today!

Break the children into groups of about three or four and show them the supplies. Invite them to choose one of their favorite parts of The Big God Story and use the supplies to create a diorama showing a version of a scene from that part of the story. Once the kids have had a chance to create their dioramas together, invite them to share their creations with the group.

BLESS// 5 minutes



Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 5 (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

Gather the children into a circle and read Matthew 28:6a.

He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.

Jesus is alive, and because Jesus lives, we can have eternal life with God. What does it mean to you to know that Jesus is alive? Let's bless each other with some praises to God. Begin the time of blessing by sharing a praise of your own.

Because Jesus lives ... (Finish the sentence with something that describes what it means to you to know that Jesus is alive, e.g., "I am saved," "I am alive," "I can share His love with others.") Invite the children to share their own statements.

May God fill you with His love and joy and life this week. May you be a blessing to others.

Send home Remember Verse cards and the At Home Weekly with your kids.