

Grade 2—Unit 11

Telling the Easter Story

The resurrection story is absolutely central to Christian faith. This unit gives children the opportunity to study the events of Holy Week that lead up to the dramatic events of Easter Sunday. The first two lessons give them a chance to create still-life *tableaux* based on the events of Holy Week and artistic “resurrection projects.” Children will also learn of the events that followed Jesus’ resurrection: his appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Thomas’ difficulty believing that Jesus was truly alive, and Christ’s ascension into heaven.

LESSONS

1. Jesus Is Crucified and Rises Again!
2. Three Women, One Empty Tomb
3. The Walk to Emmaus
4. Jesus and Thomas
5. The Ascension of Jesus

Unit 11: Telling the Easter Story

Unit Information

SUMMARY

This unit highlights the events surrounding the resurrection story: Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, the walk to Emmaus, and Jesus' ascension. Students will learn about the different reactions people had to the resurrection event, and will explore their own feelings and responses to the Easter story.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Mark 11:1-10

Matthew 23:37-39

Matthew 26:17-30

Matthew 27:27-56

Matthew 28:1-10

Luke 24:13-35

John 20:24-29

Mark 16:19-20

John 16:7

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

Telling the Easter Story

Jesus spent the last three years of his life ministering to many people. He taught, healed, and modeled a new way of living. As a servant leader, Jesus revealed the nature of God. He helped people understand how to live together in love and peace so that their lives might be more complete.

Jesus chose to die on the cross so that our sins might be forgiven. Our lives are made new through his Spirit.

The stories of Holy Week and following evoke a wide range of human emotion. The triumphant procession of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem amid the shouts of "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" fulfills Zechariah's prophecy, made 500 years earlier (Zechariah 9:9). Jesus rode into Jerusalem as King. People greeted him with cries of "Hosanna!"

The chief priests and elders were afraid of losing their power and authority. When they saw that the people were hailing Jesus and greeting him as a king, they decided that he should be killed. This decision prompted the events leading up to Good Friday.

The Jewish authorities took Jesus before the high priest in the middle of the night because they were afraid that the people would riot if their plan was discovered. They wanted to have Jesus executed as quickly as possible. Mark 15:33 describes the emotions of the day Jesus was crucified: "Darkness came over the whole land." For Jesus' followers, it was as if the light had gone out of the world, and they were left frightened, grief-stricken, and alone.

But God's power, promises, and faithfulness were revealed on that glorious morning when Jesus rose from the dead. Easter is a morning bursting with

alleluias! The Hebrew word *alleluia* means “Praise ye the Lord!” or “The Lord’s name be praised!” Easter is a day for joyous singing. Christ is risen indeed! He is risen for each one of us, giving us new life.

Beyond Easter

Three lessons in this unit focus on the days following the resurrection story: an account of Christ’s followers who encounter him on the road to Emmaus, the story of Thomas’ initial inability to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, and the story of Jesus’ ascension into heaven.

On Easter Sunday, after he had appeared to the women at the tomb, Jesus walked with two of his disciples, including Cleopas, toward Emmaus (*it is unclear where in Palestine Emmaus was located*). The disciples did not recognize him until they broke bread together, an event beautifully portrayed by the artist Caravaggio in his painting, *Supper at Emmaus*. Jesus then left them.

Jesus also appeared to most of his disciples on that same evening, but Thomas (*also called Didymus*) was absent. When his friends told him that Jesus came to them, he famously refused to believe it until he could touch Jesus’ hands and side, thus earning him (*and many others throughout history*) the moniker “Doubting Thomas.” A week later, when Jesus appeared again, Thomas was present and believed in the resurrection.

Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven, probably from Mount Olivet, a hill outside of Jerusalem. Jesus prepared his followers for this fact in John 16:7-16, in which he said that he must leave them in order that the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, might come, “to guide you into all truth.”

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Jesus was willing to die so that our sins might be forgiven.
- Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and rose from the dead.
- Holy Week is a time of contrasting emotions.
- Jesus’ followers responded in different ways to his resurrection.
- Jesus returned to God so that we might receive the Holy Spirit.

WORSHIP

Focus: Jesus’ resurrection

Worship Table Symbols:

- **Cross** (Lesson 1)
- **Stone** to represent the stone that was rolled away (Lesson 2)
- **Loaf of bread** to represent when Jesus’ followers recognized him on the way to Emmaus (Lesson 3)
- **Sculpture or cutout of a hand** to represent Thomas’ need for proof of Christ’s identity (Lesson 4)
- **Cloud made of cotton or paper** to represent Jesus’ ascension into heaven (Lesson 5)

Note: If you are using a tablecloth or other colored symbol based on the colors of the church year, notice that Lent (*Ash Wednesday through Easter*) is represented by purple, and that Easter through Pentecost (*50 days after Easter*) is represented by white.

Suggested Songs: “Little Gray Donkey” (#68, *Chatter with the Angels*); “Were You There” (#257, *Hymnal: A Worship Book*); “Jesus, Remember Me” (HWB #247); “Christ Has Arisen” (#70, *Chatter with the Angels*); “Low in the Grave He Lay” (HWB #273); “Tell the Good News,” “Easter Day,” and “Riding to Jerusalem,” (pp. 42-44 in *Jubilee Songbook*)

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

In this unit you will have several chances to add to your students’ portfolios, if they have them, and to assess children’s understanding of the material: their contributions to the creation of *tableaux* in Lesson 1, their “resurrection projects” in Lesson 2, their plot maps in Lesson 3, their written conversations with Jesus in Lesson 4, and their “5 Ws and 1 H” question summary of the ascension in Lesson 5. Photographs of students’ participation in the *tableaux* would be a nice addition to portfolios. A unit assessment is also available.

MEMORY VERSE

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)

Suggested Motions:

For God so loved the world (*make shape of globe in front of body*)
that he gave his one and only Son (*pretend to rock baby*)
that whoever believes in him (*place one hand vertically in front of you*)
shall not perish (*turn same hand to horizontal position*)
but have eternal life (*tap hand on heart to mimic heartbeat*)
For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world (*shake head “no”*)
but to save the world through him (*make motion of gathering others to yourself*)

BONUS MEMORY VERSES

Shout for joy, you people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you! He comes triumphant and victorious, but humble and riding on a donkey; on a colt, the foal of a donkey. . . . Your king will make peace among the nations; he will rule from sea to sea. (Zechariah 9:9-10)

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” (Matthew 23:37-39)



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that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall
not perish but have eternal life.
For God did not send his Son into
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but to save the world through him.

John 3:16-17

Dear Parents,

This unit, "Telling the Easter Story," highlights the events surrounding the resurrection story: Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, the walk to Emmaus, and Jesus' ascension.

Unit Overview

Students will learn about the variety of reactions people had to the events of Holy Week and to the resurrection, and will explore their own feelings and responses.

Memory Verse

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but to save the world through him (*make motion of gathering others to yourself*)

Bonus Memory Verses:

Shout for joy, you people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you! He comes triumphant and victorious, but humble and riding on a donkey; on a colt, the foal of a donkey. . . . Your king will make peace among the nations; he will rule from sea to sea. (Zechariah 9:9-10)

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Ideas

- ✓ A nice way to make Easter more real for children is to expose them to symbols of new life during this season: plant a bulb in soil and watch it grow and bloom, take your child to see new-born chicks, read a book about a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.
- ✓ Churches within your community and surrounding towns probably have unique Holy Week and Easter rituals that your child might enjoy observing. Some churches hold Maundy Thursday services, Good Friday services, and Easter vigils on the Saturday night before Easter Sunday. Sometimes experiencing the holiday through the lens of a different church's tradition can bring new meaning to one's own family observance of Christ's death and resurrection.
- ✓ **Worship Table:** Consider changing the color of a tablecloth or cover based on the colors of the church calendar. Lent, the season from Ash Wednesday through Easter, is usually represented by the color purple. The Easter season, usually considered to span the 50 days from Easter to Pentecost, is symbolized by the color white. Symbols for the table could include: **a cross**; **a stone** to represent the empty grave; **a loaf of bread** to represent the disciples' recognition of Christ in Emmaus; **a cutout of a hand** to represent Thomas' need for proof of Christ's resurrection; and **a cotton cloud** to represent Jesus' ascension into heaven.
- ✓ Jesus' death and resurrection are the subjects of many great works of art throughout the centuries. Page through an art book with your child, or go online to view some of the moving and beautiful artistic depictions of the Holy Week events.

Telling the Easter Story

LESSON 1: JESUS IS CRUCIFIED AND RISES AGAIN!

Objective

Students will collaboratively create still-life *tableaux* based on the four main events of Holy Week.

Key Concepts

- Jesus loves us so much that he was willing to suffer and die for us.
- Holy Week involves both sad and glad feelings, culminating in the joy of Christ's resurrection.

Text: Mark 11:1-10 (*Palm Sunday*), Matthew 26:17-30 (*Maundy Thursday*), Matthew 27:27-54 (*Good Friday*), Matthew 28:1-10 (*Easter Sunday*)

Estimated Lesson Time: 35-40 minutes (*or several sessions, if you present the tableaux to other classes or parents*)

Materials

- *Book of Bible Stories* by Tomie dePaola, if possible
- Student Bibles
- Photos of people posing in a passion play or *tableau*
- Costumes and props for the *tableaux*, if desired (*see Teacher Preparation #4*)

Teacher Preparation

1. Obtain a copy of Tomie dePaola's *Book of Bible Stories*, if possible, or prepare to read or tell students about the four main events of Holy Week: Palm Sunday, the Last Supper (*Maundy Thursday*), Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.
2. Bring in several photos that illustrate the concept of a *tableau* (*photos from a passion play would be particularly effective*).
3. If you wish, arrange for several other classes in your school and/or parents to come and view the four Holy Week *tableaux* that your children create. (*See Extend the Lesson, page 364, for ideas*).
4. If possible, find costumes and props for the *tableaux* (*see lesson steps*), especially if you're planning to present them to other classes or parents. A nice touch would be to find four large pieces of fabric, each in a different color, to hang as backdrops behind the *tableaux*, or to use as curtains that are dropped to reveal the *tableaux* when the students are in place.
5. *Optional:* You may want to ask a parent volunteer to help students prepare their *tableaux*, especially if you plan to present the scenes for other classes or parents. Still-life scenes sound a lot easier to prepare than skits, but to achieve their maximum effect, they need a lot of thought: placement of people in the scene, facial expressions, props, costumes, etc.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Draw eight large blocks in a row, on the board or a sheet of newsprint, to illustrate a week, from Sunday to Sunday. Explain that today you will read about the four major events in the story of Jesus: Palm Sunday (*when Jesus entered Jerusalem*), Maundy Thursday (*the Last Supper*), Good Friday (*when Jesus was crucified*), and Easter Sunday (*when Jesus rose from the dead*). Then you will work on a project about these events. Tell them that this week is often called Holy Week. It is as important in the church year as Christmas, because it is when we celebrate Christ's power over death.

(Optional: Before you talk about Holy Week, you could ask students what they do different days of the week: go to church on Sunday, violin lessons on Tuesday, work in the yard on Saturday, etc.)

LESSON STEPS

1. The emotions of Holy Week. If you have Tomie dePaola's *Book of Bible Stories*, read the four stories dealing with Holy Week: "Jesus Enters Jerusalem," "The Lord's Supper," "Jesus Dies on the Cross," and "The Resurrection." Since the stories come directly from the New International Version of the Bible, students may wish to follow along in their Bibles as the stories are read.

After reading each story, ask students to brainstorm the emotions Jesus' followers might have been feeling on that day. *For example: on Palm Sunday, they may have felt joy and anticipation; on Maundy Thursday, they probably felt confused; on Good Friday, they probably felt sad and angry and scared; on Easter Sunday, they probably felt happy and surprised, and maybe fearful—then elated.* Write down the emotions your students suggest on your large "calendar" of Holy Week.

2. Practice still-life scenes. Explain that today the students will be creating *tableaux*, which are still-life scenes from a story. They are like skits, but have no talking or movement. You could compare a skit to a movie and a *tableau* to a still photograph. Have the class practice showing certain emotions or "actions" while remaining as still as they possibly can. Show the photo(s) you brought of people posing in a passion play or *tableau*, and have the students try to strike the poses in the photo(s).

3. Create tableaux. Divide the class into four groups, one for each event of Holy Week that you discussed. Have each group pick one scene from their event and, keeping in mind the main emotions they just brainstormed, create a *tableau* of that scene. The groups will probably need your help in choosing a specific scene from their event, choosing parts, and practicing.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(This activity will take longer than the regular lesson time.)

- **Plan a tableau program.** Invite other classes or parents to view your *tableaux*. Practice for the event over several weeks, and prepare posters and refreshments. Think about whether the scenes will be viewed simultaneously or separately, and how the transitions will occur. People could view the *tableaux* silently, or, if you have them occurring in different rooms or in succession, someone could read the scripture passage that goes with each *tableau*. A nice finish to the viewing experience would be to have your students recite their memory verses, John 3:16-17. You could also wait to do this until students have completed the "resurrection projects" in Lesson 2, and include those projects in the experience.

Telling the Easter Story

LESSON 2: THREE WOMEN, ONE EMPTY TOMB

Objective

Students will demonstrate their understanding of the resurrection story by creating “resurrection projects.”

Key Concepts

- Jesus’ resurrection from the dead surprised his followers.
- Jesus’ actions can still surprise us, thousands of years later.

Text: Mark 16:1-11

Estimated Lesson Time: 35 minutes

Materials

- Student Bibles
- Letter materials: pencils and paper
- Stained-glass window materials: white and black construction paper, crayons, wide permanent black markers, vegetable oil, hole puncher, and ribbon
(*Optional: book with pictures of stained-glass windows*)
- Collage materials: old magazines (*especially gardening and nature magazines*), scissors, large pieces of paper, glue

Teacher Preparation

1. Set up the three resurrection project stations (*see lesson step #2 for details*).
2. Decide if you’d like to have students display their resurrection projects for others—the results of this lesson could be combined with the *tableaux* from Lesson 1 to create an experience to which your class could invite others.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Start a conversation about times the children have been surprised. What surprised them? How did they react? Was it a good surprise or a bad surprise? Instead of doing this orally, you could also have children write some notes and draw a picture about a time that they were surprised.

LESSON STEPS

- 1. Read or tell the story** of the three women at the tomb from Mark 16:1-11. Children could follow along in their Bibles as you read.
- 2. Resurrection Projects.** Explain that the students will choose one of three ways to experience the resurrection story through the eyes of the three women: writing a letter to someone to tell them about what they discovered at the tomb; making a stained-glass window of the scene at the empty tomb; or making a collage of symbols, words, and colors to illustrate the Easter event. Show the children the three work stations, and invite them to choose one.

Letters:

Students should imagine they are one of the women in the story: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, or Salome. They can choose to write the letter to the woman's husband, child, friend, or faraway relative, telling them about the events at the tomb on Easter morning.

If children are having trouble making this imaginative leap, they could also choose to pretend that they were accompanying the women to the tomb and write a letter to a real person they know today to tell them about it.

Stained-Glass Windows:

Students should choose a scene from the resurrection story to illustrate: the women walking to the tomb, the angel speaking to them, the women fleeing from the tomb, etc. With crayons, they should draw the scene on white construction paper, pressing down hard.

They will then use a wide permanent black marker to draw the leading, and rub the back of the paper with vegetable oil. They can then cut a frame out of black paper, mount the "window," and display it on a real window so the light shines through it. (*You might want to show them pictures of real stained-glass windows.*)

c. Collages:

Students should choose 3-5 words that represent the resurrection story to them. They should then choose several symbols of Easter (*You may need to help by defining a symbol and brainstorming with the students. Symbols might include: a lily, an empty tomb, an egg, a butterfly, an empty cross, etc.*)

Using their chosen words and symbols, students should then cut out pictures from old magazines and arrange them with their words and symbols on a sheet of paper. Another possibility would be to draw the outline of the symbol and paste torn construction paper on the inside of the symbol. They could then write the words underneath.

3. Bible memory. As students finish their resurrection projects, they can work on memorizing the Bible memory verses, John 3:16-17.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will take longer than the regular lesson time.)

• **The Faces of Jesus: A Life Story.** Obtain a copy of this book by Frederick Buechner, and retell the story of Holy Week as viewed by the artists. Refer to Bible texts as appropriate. Talk with children about what moods or emotions the artists might have been trying to portray, and about the various styles of art. Of particular interest are the Last Supper [#76, 78], In the garden [#81, 82], Christ with a crown of thorns [#5, 93, 97], Christ carrying the cross [#6], Crucifixion [#4, 101, 103, 110, 112, 121], and Burial [#115, 120, 121].

Telling the Easter Story

LESSON 3: THE WALK TO EMMAUS

Objective

Students will construct plot graphs of the story of Jesus appearing to his followers on the road to Emmaus.

Key Concepts

- Jesus surprised his followers by rising from the dead and appearing to them.
- Jesus can still surprise us with his presence today.

Text: Luke 24:13-35

Estimated Lesson Time: 35 minutes

Materials

- Student Bibles
- Costume for mystery guest
- “The Walk to Emmaus” plot graph (p. 369)

Teacher Preparation

1. Option one for Introducing the Lesson: Ask another teacher or a student at your school to come to your classroom at lesson time, dressed in costume so your students don’t recognize her/him. Ask the guest to remain silent until you ask her/him to speak, to give your students a chance to guess who it is.
2. Familiarize yourself with the plot graph, and be prepared to draw a graph of Holy Week to illustrate (*see sample plot graph under lesson step #2*).
3. Make copies of “The Walk to Emmaus,” one for each student

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Option 1: Invite the mystery guest into your classroom. Give the students some chances to guess who it is—you can give them some hints, or ask the mystery guest to say a sentence to see if they recognize the voice. After some time, ask the guest to take off part of the costume or reveal her/his identity in some way.

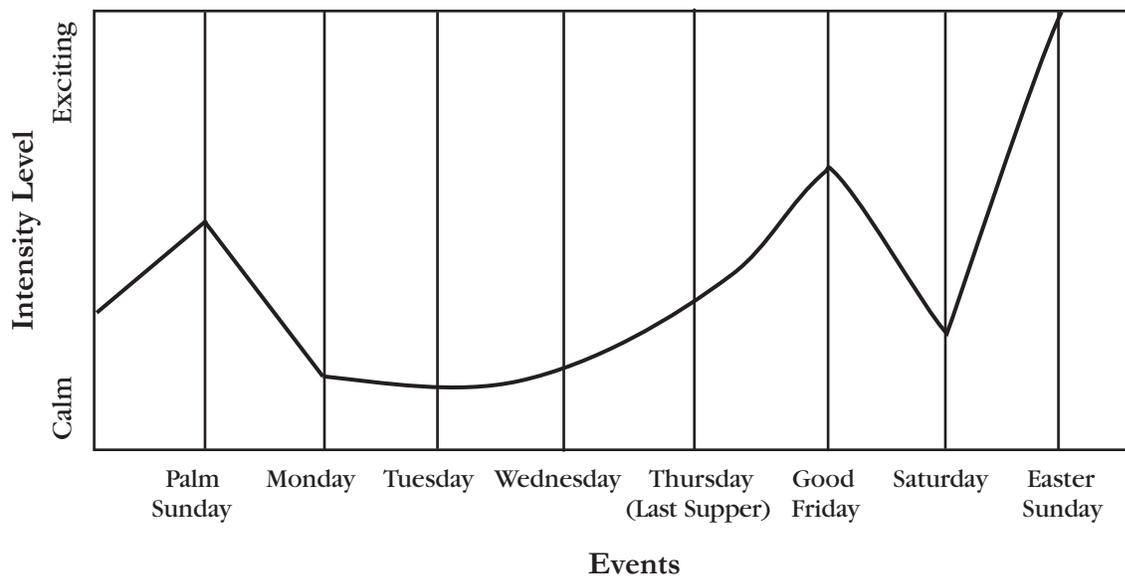
Option 2: Ask students if they ever saw someone who had changed so much they didn’t recognize who it was at first. Maybe the person had a different hairstyle, or got new glasses, or lost a lot of weight. Ask the children to tell their stories and explain why they didn’t recognize the people.

LESSON STEPS

1. Read the story. Explain that you will read a story about a time Jesus appeared to some of his followers after his resurrection and they didn’t recognize him. Have students turn to Luke 24:13-35 in their Bibles, and as you read it aloud, ask them

to pay special attention to the moment in which the two finally recognize Jesus. What was Jesus doing that helped them realize who he was?

2. Explain plot graphs. Hand out copies of p. 369 and explain to students that they will be drawing a line to show the level of excitement during each stage of this story. You will probably want to draw a sample plot graph on the board or on newsprint to illustrate how this works. You could do one of Holy Week, for example, starting on Palm Sunday and moving through Easter, with the Last Supper and Good Friday in between. Show children how the line goes higher when the excitement increases. Tell them that the “climax” is the point when the excitement has reached its peak. *(See the sample below for one idea of how such a graph might look.)*



3. Work on plot graphs individually. When the students have completed their graphs, have them get into groups of three or four to share their graphs with each other and compare them. Help students talk about the differences and similarities in their plot graphs, and invite them to explain why they chose to make their lines rise and fall where they do. Emphasize that there is no one “right” way to draw a plot graph, and that it’s okay if their graphs look different. The benefit of this exercise is to get students talking with each other about the events of the story and how they respond to them.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(This activity will take longer than the regular lesson time.)

• **Graph another Bible story.** To continue the work with plot graphs, have students choose a Bible story you have studied this year and make a plot graph for it. *(Graph paper works well for this, or students can simply draw their own axes on blank paper.)* You may need to help them identify the key events of the story, as opposed to the details. You could also make a list of the Bible stories they have studied and have each student choose one. You could then compile the graphs into a booklet. This would be an excellent way for students to review what they have learned so far in Bible class this year.

Name: _____

The Walk to Emmaus

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Exciting

Calm

Two of Jesus' followers begin walking to Emmaus. A "stranger" joins them. He begins to explain scripture to them. They invite him to stay with them. He breaks bread and they recognize it is Jesus. They return to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples.

Telling the Easter Story

LESSON 4: JESUS AND THOMAS

Objective

Students will reflect on the concept of trust and will write dialogues based on imaginary conversations with Jesus.

Key Concepts

- Jesus surprised his followers by rising from the dead and appearing to them.
- Jesus can still surprise us with his presence today.
- The Christian faith sometimes means trusting in things that can't be proven.

Text: John 20:24-29

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-35 minutes

Materials

- Student Bibles
- Scarf for blindfold (1 for every 2 students)
- “Faith Maze,” (p. 372)
- Crayons or colored pencils (*optional*)
- For Extend the Lesson: “Bible Memory Cloze” activity (p. 373)

Teacher Preparation

1. Make copies of “Faith Maze,” one for each student.
2. If using Extend the Lesson, make copies of the cloze activity, one per student.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Trusting each other. Pair up students and give each pair a scarf. Tie the scarf over the eyes of one partner. Have the other partner lead the blindfolded one around the classroom, holding onto his/her hand. (*If it's a nice day, do the exercise outdoors.*) After several minutes, have the students switch roles so that everyone gets to be a leader and a follower. (*You may need to make certain rules about where and how the “seeing” students lead the blindfolded ones, so that no one gets hurt.*) Afterward, gather everyone together to debrief. Focus questions on how it felt to be blindfolded: What emotions did they feel? Did they have any idea where they were going or what objects they were near?

LESSON STEPS

1. Read the story. Explain that today's Bible story introduces Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, who had a hard time trusting in Jesus' resurrection when he hadn't seen Jesus for himself. He probably felt like he was being led around blindfolded! Have students turn to John 20:24-29 in their Bibles.

Option 1: Read the verses and have students follow along.

Option 2: Reinforce the idea that dialogue appears in quotation marks. Assign parts to student volunteers to read aloud: a narrator, the other disciples, Thomas, and Jesus.

2. “Faith Maze.” Hand out the maze for students to find their way from DOUBT to FAITH. Talk about how sometimes, even when we have great faith, things are not always clear. It is always helpful to spend time in prayer and talking with other Christians when we are confused about something. *See maze solution below.*

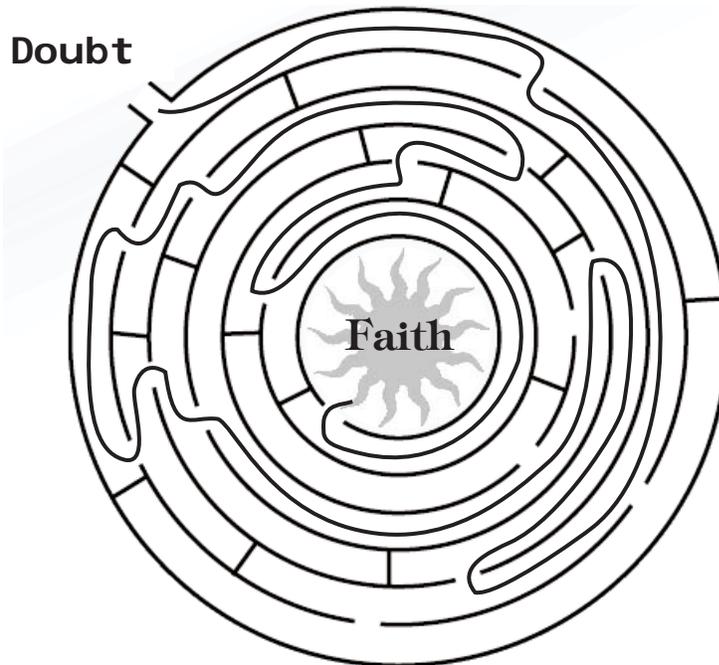
3. Draw a picture. If you have time, have students draw pictures of themselves at home or at school. Then, using only a yellow crayon or pencil, they can draw Jesus somewhere in the picture to show that he is always with us even when we can’t exactly see him.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(This activity will take longer than the regular lesson time.)

- **“Memory Verse Cloze.”** Have the students complete this worksheet activity on their Bible memory verse from p. 373.

Maze solution:



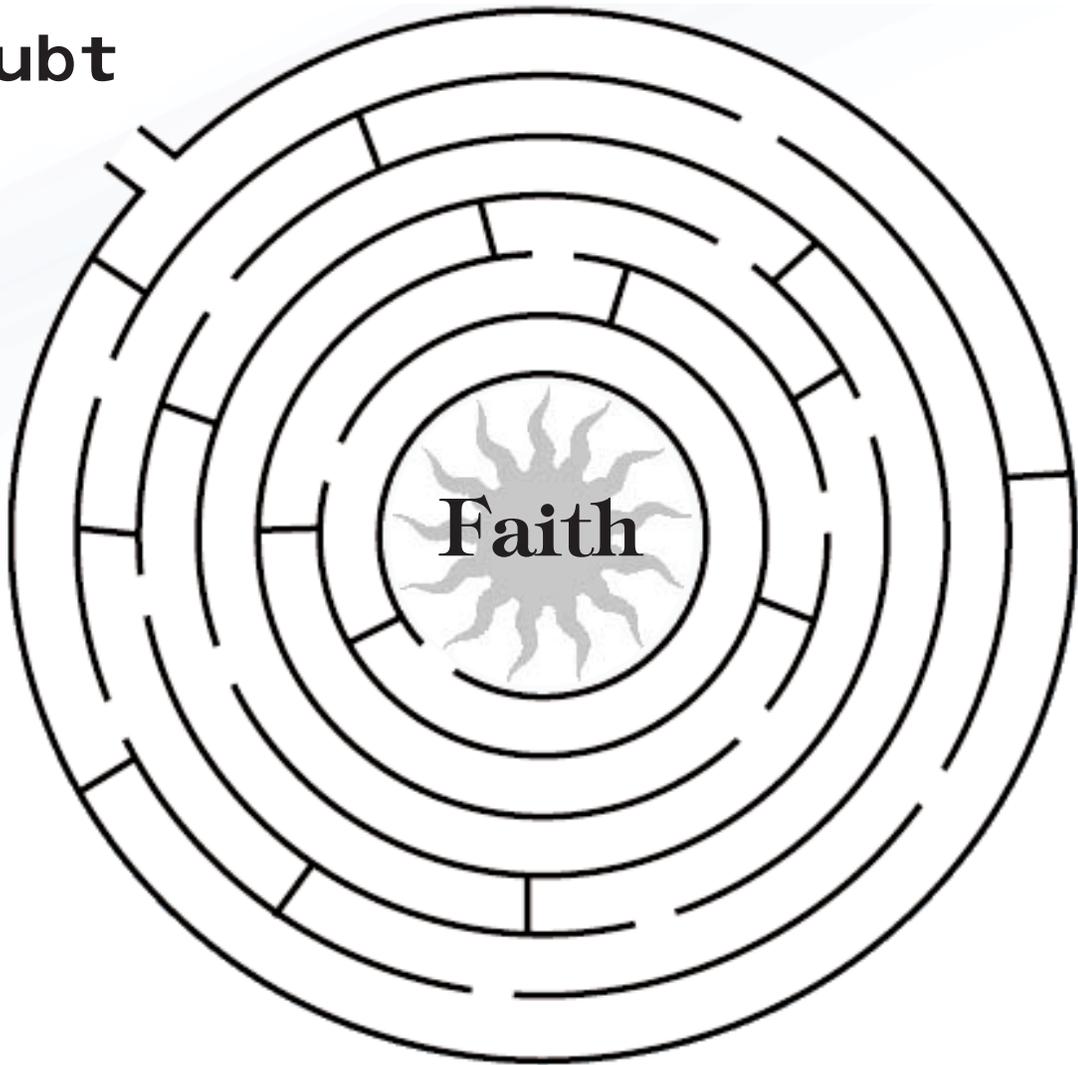
Name: _____

Faith Maze

Faith is sometimes like a maze. We know what we believe, but answers aren't always clear right away. We need to spend time in prayer to God and talking with other Christians to help find our way.

Start at the word DOUBT and find your way through the maze to FAITH.

Doubt



This is one thing I learned today about faith:

Name: _____

Memory Verse Cloze

Fill in the blanks of the memory verses with the words below.

life
John
loved
believes

save
God
send
world

gave
perish
Son



For _____ so _____ the world that
he _____ his one and only _____, that
whoever _____ in him shall not
_____ but have eternal _____.

For God did not _____ his Son into the
_____ to condemn the world, but to
_____ the world through him.

_____ 3:16-17

Memory Verse Cloze

Fill in the blanks of the memory verses with the words below.

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Son



For God so loved the world that
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perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the
world to condemn the world, but to
save the world through him.

John 3:16-17

Telling the Easter Story

LESSON 5: THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

Objective

Students will use the “5 Ws and 1 H” questions (*who, what, when, where, why, and how*) to summarize the ascension of Jesus and to interview each other about significant events in their lives.

Key Concepts

- Jesus returned to heaven after his ministry on earth here was through.
- Jesus’ return to heaven made it possible for the Holy Spirit to come to earth at Pentecost.

Text: Mark 16:19-20, John 16:7

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-35 minutes

Materials

- Newsprint with question words (*see Teacher Preparation #1*)
- Student Bibles
- “5 Ws and 1 H” (p. 377)

Teacher Preparation

1. On a large sheet of newsprint, write “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where,” “Why,” and “How” down the left side.
2. Be prepared to tell your class about an experience of saying goodbye to someone you love. It could be an experience from your childhood, such as saying goodbye to beloved grandparents, or from adulthood, such as saying goodbye to an international friend returning to their homeland across the world.
3. Make copies of “5 Ws and 1 H” (*one for each student*) and cut them in half, so that each student receives two half-sheets. (*Notice that the sheets are slightly different. Make sure each student gets one from the left and one from the right.*)

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Invite children into a conversation about saying goodbye to people they love. First, tell them about a time when you had to say goodbye to someone. As you’re telling them the story, fill in blanks of your “Who, What, When, Where, Why, How” sheet of newsprint.

Then invite several children, one at a time, to share times that they’ve said goodbye to someone. Try to identify the “5 Ws and 1 H” in each student’s story.

LESSON STEPS

1. Read the story. Explain that the students will be learning about the time when the disciples had to say goodbye to their beloved friend and leader, Jesus, who had to return to heaven. Read Mark 16:19-20 to the class, as students follow along in their own Bibles.

2. “5 Ws and 1 H.” Distribute copies of the left half-sheet, one to each student. Ask them to try to fill it out on their own, by looking at the Mark passage. You might want to do this in groups of two. Write “John 16:7” on the board and tell students that they will find the answer to the “Why” question by turning in their Bibles to that verse.

3. Student interviews. While students are completing the worksheet (*or ahead of time*), write a list of events on the chalkboard that most students have experienced: first day of school, learning to ride a bike, going on vacation, going to a birthday party, performing in a holiday program at church or school, visiting the zoo, etc.

When the children have completed the half-sheet of questions about Jesus’ ascension, hand out the right half-sheet of questions to each student. Put the children in pairs, and have them decide together on an event. When they have chosen the event, instruct them to take turns interviewing each other about it. They don’t have to answer each of the categories, but should try to answer some of them.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(This activity will take longer than the regular lesson time.)

- **Expand on the interview idea** and have children brainstorm major life events about which they could interview adults: baptism or other major spiritual milestones, first jobs, weddings, births of children, mission or service assignments, accidents, etc. Have each child write down a list of five to ten questions to ask an adult. Since note-taking is a difficult skill for this age group, you could encourage students to record the interviews so they can listen to them again and write things down, or else take along a parent or older sibling to the interview who would be the note-taker.

Name: _____

JESUS' ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN

WHO: _____

WHAT: _____

WHEN: _____

WHERE: _____

WHY: _____

HOW: _____

EVENT: _____

WHO: _____

WHAT: _____

WHEN: _____

WHERE: _____

WHY: _____

HOW: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of Person Being Interviewed: _____

Name: _____

Unit 11 Assessment

1. *Write a number beside the events to show the order in which they happened.*

___ Jesus is crucified on a cross.

___ Jesus ascends into heaven.

___ Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey.

___ Jesus and his disciples eat the Last Supper.

___ Jesus appears to two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

___ The women find an empty tomb.

Circle the correct answer.

2. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus . . .

- a. recognized Jesus right away.
- b. never figured out who he was.
- c. recognized him when he broke bread.

3. Thomas had a hard time with what part of following Jesus?

- a. Being kind to others
- b. Trusting
- c. Being thankful

4. Why did Jesus ascend into heaven?

- a. So that the Holy Spirit could take his place on earth.
- b. Because Jesus was tired of living on earth.
- c. To surprise and impress his followers.

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