

Explore It FOR LEADERS



THE FIRST EASTER

📖 **John 19:38-42; Matthew 28:1-10** Jesus rises from death

🎯 **AIM:** To discover four important people in the Easter story

In today's session we take time to think about characters who don't normally get much of a mention when we consider the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus. We will think about the change in Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus and the way they served Jesus. We will also consider the important role women played in the story of Jesus as we discover more about Mary Magdalene and 'the other Mary'.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- Bible Clues handout
- A Bible, a book, app or online version (or one per pair/group)
- Prayer questions (the sheet can be cut into strips)

Start It

💬 **Say:** Nowadays many people think of chocolate when they hear the word Easter, rather than thinking of the story of Jesus. Watch this clip showing the huge Easter eggs made at Bettys, a tearoom in Harrogate which is famous for its cakes.

Video

How we make our giant imperial Easter eggs by Bettys1919 (1 min 20 secs)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_FIGH1hv8Y

💬 **Say:** Imagine you are an Easter egg designer at Bettys and you have been asked to design a chocolate egg that shows people the true story of Easter. Have a go at creating your Easter egg design and share it with the rest of the group.

Sing It

💬 **Say:** This song was introduced in our *Explore It* sessions last month and reminds us of the amazing story of Jesus.

'Jesus song' by Saddleback Kids (2 mins 45 secs)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rn84AYtFUSM

💬 **Say:** Continuing our time of praise, let's share our memory verse together.

Memory verse

**'You are my God, and I will thank you.
You are my God, and I will praise your greatness.
Thank the Lord because he is good.
His love continues for ever.'**

— (Psalm 118:28-29 ICB)

Tell It

Say: In the last session we joined Jesus as he rode on a donkey into Jerusalem. Jesus continued to teach the people, but the religious leaders did not like what he was saying and doing. They plotted to kill Jesus. Let's watch the clip to find out what happened.

Video

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (Easter 2020) by The Gospel Project for Kids (3 mins 25 secs)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=X69BRjpALSE

Say: In this retelling of the Easter story there are a few characters who don't even get a mention; but in the Bible, we find them playing an important part in the story of Jesus.

Read:

'Later, a man named Joseph from Arimathea asked Pilate if he could take the body of Jesus. (Joseph was a secret follower of Jesus, because he was afraid of the Jews.) Pilate gave his permission. So Joseph came and took Jesus' body away. Nicodemus went with Joseph. Nicodemus was the man who earlier had come to Jesus at night. He brought about 75 pounds of spices. This was a mixture of myrrh and aloes. These two men took Jesus' body and wrapped it with the spices in pieces of linen cloth. (This is how the Jews bury people.) In the place where Jesus was killed, there was a garden. In the garden was a new tomb where no one had ever been buried. The men laid Jesus in that tomb because it was near, and the Jews were preparing to start their Sabbath day.'

— (John 19:38-42 ICB)

Ask: Which two characters do you spot in the story that you haven't met before?

Say: Later in the session you are going to have the chance to find out more about them, but for now, let's meet the two Marys.

Read:

'The day after the Sabbath day was the first day of the week. At dawn on the first day, Mary Magdalene and another woman named Mary went to look at the tomb.

'At that time there was a strong earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from heaven. The angel went to the tomb and rolled the stone away from the entrance. Then he sat on the stone. He was shining as bright as lightning. His clothes were white as snow. The soldiers guarding the tomb were very frightened of the angel. They shook with fear and then became like dead men.

'The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, the one who was killed on the cross. But he is not here. He has risen from death as he said he would. Come and see the place where his body was. And go quickly and tell his followers. Say to them: 'Jesus has risen from death. He is going into Galilee. He will be there before you. You will see him there.'" Then the angel said, "Now I have told you."

'The women left the tomb quickly. They were afraid, but they were also very happy. They ran to tell Jesus' followers what had happened. Suddenly, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings." The women came up to Jesus, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go on to Galilee. They will see me there."

— (Matthew 28:1-10 ICB)

Ask:

→ What surprising things happened in this story?

→ Which two Marys did you meet?

Say: Along with the angels, fainting soldiers and supernatural events, another surprising thing happened. It was not usual for women to be included in any official records. In New Testament times they weren't even permitted to give evidence in court. It was a huge surprise that Matthew shared that the women were the first to see Jesus risen from the dead.

Ask: What do Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary all have in common?

Say: All four characters loved Jesus and cared for him in his darkest moments. They played an important part in the story of Jesus.

Action It

Bible detectives

Say: You are going to be Bible detectives and look for clues about these characters, to learn more about them.

Give each child a copy of the Bible Clues handout. The main aim of this activity is for the children to spend time exploring an unfamiliar character from the Easter story. Question prompts and Bible references are provided for each character. They can work individually, in groups, or work with a leader to focus on one character and feed back to the rest of the group.

As there will not be enough time in the session to explore all four characters in depth, ask the children to take their handouts home as the *Explore It For Me* activity encourages the children to continue their search for clues.

Ask: What surprising discoveries have you made about these lesser-known characters?

Say: Whether our role is big or small, we all have an important part to play in the story of Jesus.

Pray It

As part of the Easter sessions there is an opportunity for the children to reflect on what Jesus' death and resurrection means to them. Give each child the prayer questions, a strip of paper with these two questions on it:

- In what way does Jesus coming back to life make a difference to how you see your own life?
- How could you be an important character in the story of Jesus?

Give the children time to respond to the questions. You can use the song link below as background music during this activity.

Video

'Thank you Jesus for the blood' (Live) by Charity Gayle (5 mins 26 secs)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhU-Omwg2rU

Discuss the children's responses and then pray with the group.

Explore It

Remember to send home the *Explore It Ideas* for children and families.

Explore It

IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

APRIL
SESSION 02

THE FIRST EASTER

 John 19:38-42; Matthew 28:1-10 Jesus rises from death

© AIM: To discover four important people in the Easter story

FOR ME

TOGETHER



Explore

As part of this week's session, you started to explore characters from the Easter story that don't normally get much of a mention. Using the Bible Clues handout from the session, choose another character to explore in more depth.



Make

See if someone at home will help you to make your own chocolate Easter egg. Have a look at the clip to help you create an Easter egg masterpiece.

How to make homemade chocolate Easter eggs DIY Recipe! by Blue Peter

www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBJtU9RHwEA



Song for the week

'Jesus Song' by Saddleback Kids

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rn84AYtFUSM



Memory verse

'You are my God, and I will thank you.

You are my God, and I will praise your greatness.

Thank the Lord because he is good.

His love continues for ever.'

— (Psalm 118:28-29 ICB)

KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!

