

LESSON AIM: To communicate (*with joy and enthusiasm*) that Jesus is alive!

KEY SCRIPTURES: Matthew 28:1-10 & John 11:25-26

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why did Jesus have to die?
- 2) How did Jesus die?
- 3) What was something He said on the cross?
- 4) Review last week's verse; have the students explain it in their own words.

INTRODUCTION:

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most significant event that has happened in history. Our entire timeline of history revolves around the life and death of Jesus.
- If Jesus would have stayed dead, Christianity would just be another religion like any other; but because Jesus is alive, this proves He is God!
- There are several object lessons that are effective in illustrating the concept of resurrection. One idea is to take metallic and non-metallic 'pins', cover them lightly with dirt and then 'resurrect' the metallic ones with a magnet.
- Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the dead in Christ will one day be resurrected.

LESSON:

There are many different religions. Christianity is the only one whose leader physically and bodily rose from the dead. Buddha is dead, Mohammed is dead, and all the others are still dead. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me though he may die, he shall live." "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." - **John 11:25-26**. How could anyone possibly make a claim like that...unless of course, He was God! Jesus is God and one of the greatest proofs of His deity is that after being in a grave for three days, He came back to life...he was dead when they put Him in a borrowed tomb but he was definitely alive when He came out.

Several hours before sunset Jesus' body had been taken down from the cross. It had been a very spooky and strange day. In the middle of the day the sky had suddenly turned dark. The darkness had lasted for three hours. There had also been an earthquake. A huge eighteen inch thick curtain in the temple had suddenly ripped from the top to the bottom, and there were even reports that people who had died had been seen walking around on the streets of Jerusalem!

But now Jesus was dead and a few of his friends were taking His mutilated body down from the cross, and they only had a few hours before the Sabbath Day would begin. In keeping with the Jewish law, the body of Jesus would have to be prepared for burial and sealed in the tomb before sundown. Following Jewish burial custom, the body of Jesus was wrapped with strips of linen, along with anointing him with about one hundred pounds of spices.

Knowing that Jesus had said He would arise from the dead on the third day, the religious leaders asked Pilate to send a squad of Roman soldiers to guard the tomb. The soldiers affixed the Roman seal to the tomb (*anyone who broke the seal would be executed*) and settled in for what they probably thought would be pretty boring duty. All of the disciples and friends of Jesus were devastated and were hiding out. Even though Jesus had told them many times what had happened, they never really understood that Jesus was going to die. Jesus had also told Him that He would rise again, but everyone was too upset, frightened and shocked to remember that part! Friday was a sad day... but Sunday was coming!

In Mark 16:1-5 it tells us that the women got up early to go to the tomb and were wondering who was going to help them move the giant stone that had sealed the tomb that Jesus was laid in. But when they got there, the stone had been THROWN away from the entrance! Let's read what happened.

Have the students read Matthew 28:1-10.

Did you notice who was the FIRST person to see Jesus alive? It was Mary! What happened? (There was an earthquake, an angel came and spoke to them, etc). They ran back and told the others, but the disciples were still too sad, they didn't believe them! Jesus began appearing to them in all different parts of the city! One of the disciples Thomas, would not believe it. He even said "Unless I actually touch the holes in His hands and in his feet I won't believe it." So guess what? Jesus just appears in the room and says "Thomas, come and put your hands in the holes in my hands and in my feet". Now everyone had seen Jesus, their hope was restored!

The Bible tells us that five hundred different people saw Him after He was resurrected! (I Cor. 15:6). Even the soldiers that were guarding the tomb saw Him rise from the dead, and the Pharisees had to pay them money to keep them quiet from telling anyone! So what does the resurrection of Jesus Christ mean to me? To use the Apostle Paul's words, Jesus has taken away the sting of death. A bee with a stinger can hurt us, but once it loses its stinger, it can never sting again! We are guaranteed eternal life because of Jesus' sacrifice if we believe and repent. The resurrection changed everything! Because of the resurrection of Jesus, death cannot hurt us and it cannot keep us in the grave. Those who know Jesus will be resurrected to meet Him in the sky and live forever with Him in heaven!

MEMORY VERSE:

(Every year):

"He is not here, for He is risen, as He said." Matthew 28:6a