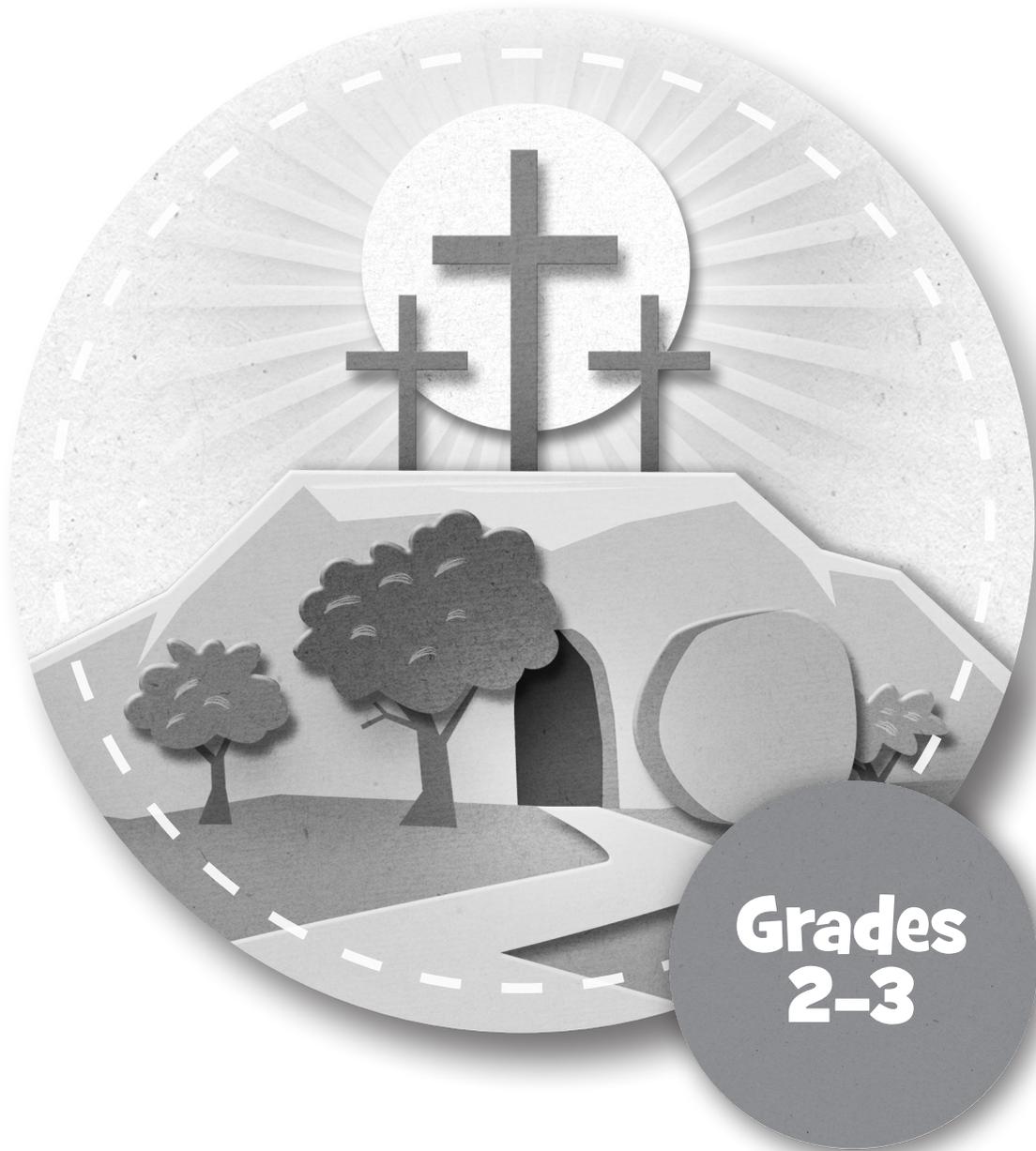


Answers Bible Curriculum

#2

Easter Lesson



ESV

Answers Bible Curriculum was developed to present the gospel, beginning in Genesis, to all generations; to train believers to know, obey, and defend God's Word; and to encourage believers to become conformed to the image of Christ.

Certain principles guided our writers, editors, and reviewers as we developed Answers Bible Curriculum. These principles are reflected in the teaching, activities, and illustrations presented throughout the curriculum.

- We can trust all of God's Word beginning in Genesis.
- God's attributes are displayed throughout the Bible.
- The Bible presents true history.
- We must carefully and accurately interpret the Bible.
- God's plan of redemption is woven throughout Scripture.

- We must be ready to give a defense for what we believe.
- We are to live in light of what the Bible teaches.

Answers Bible Curriculum is a 200-lesson curriculum that covers the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, in chronological fashion. The first 120 lessons survey the Old Testament, and the final 80 lessons survey the New Testament. Where appropriate, lessons include apologetics material confirming the accuracy of the biblical record, as well as historical background and life application.

- 200-lesson, four-year curriculum (50 lessons per year); but take as long as you need to complete it
- Available in six age levels: Pre-K-1, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-5, Middle School, High School, Adult
- Chronological Bible teaching for all levels
- Synchronized lessons—all ages study the same scriptures each week

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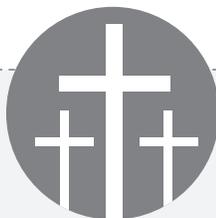
Answers Bible Curriculum

Grades 2-3 Teacher

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Discerning the Truth

The Bible gives infallible evidence that Jesus rose from the dead.

Lesson Focus

The accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection are foundational to the gospel message. Although skeptics have come up with theories to try to explain or deny these events, no theory can account for the facts that Jesus died, rose from the dead, and appeared to many witnesses to confirm what happened.

Key Passages

John 19:28–35; Matthew 28:1–15

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- List evidences of Jesus' death and resurrection.
- Explain why theories that deny Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are false.

Memory Verse

Matthew 28:6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

Lesson Preparation

Come On In

Choose a Come On In activity and print/gather necessary items.

- Memory Verse Scramble
- In or Out

Memory Verse

Print the Memory Verse Poster.

Choose a Memory Verse Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Egg Hunt
- Scrambled Eggs

Studying God's Word

Print the following:

- One Class Notes for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.
- One Lesson Poster.
- One set of Resurrection Proofs attached facedown to the wall or board.
- One set of False Ideas cut apart and taped underneath students' chairs.

Bring the following:

- True/false statements written on separate pieces of paper. (See Introduction.)
- Tape or poster putty.

Review Game—Bible Baseball

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Bring the following:

- One die
- Masking tape or chairs for bases

Go to Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the accuracy and trustworthiness of your Word. The Gospels all record Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection because these events are central to the gospel. We serve a risen Savior! Please use this lesson to help my students see that they can always trust your Word over man's ideas. Strengthen their faith or open their eyes to their need for salvation.

We recommend the following order for churches using a large group/small group format:

Large Group

Studying God's Word
Group Prayer

Small Group

Come On In
Memory Verse
Review Game
Optional Activity
Take Home Sheet

Optional Supplements

Hands-On Activities

Do these activities when you think best—before, during, or after the lesson.

- **Easter Sunrise Candle**
Students will use colorful sand to create a decorative candle.
- **Roll the Stone Relay**
Students will race in teams to bat balloons across the room and back.
- **Coloring Sheet**
Students will color as you review today's lesson with them.
- **Justin and Jessie Story—*Resurrection Seeds***
Justin and Jessie celebrate Easter in a new way that reminds them of Jesus' resurrection.

PowerPoint

You may want to use the PowerPoint presentation to enhance your teaching. Before opening the slides, be sure to download and install the fonts provided.

Notes

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

The central focus of Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. It was this pivotal moment in history, when Jesus conquered death and the grave, that gives humanity hope for all eternity if only they will repent and trust in Christ for salvation. The resurrection is central to Christianity (1 Corinthians 15:12–19), and it happened in real time and history. Paul speaks with all surety and confidence when he says, “Christ has been raised from the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:20). He grounds this in both the revelation of the Scriptures (verses 3–4), the testimony of those who had seen him (verses 5–8), and the historicity of Adam and the entrance of death into creation (verses 21–22). Because of Christ’s triumphant resurrection from the dead, we can have full confidence in the coming resurrection of the dead when we, in resurrected bodies, will dwell with Christ for eternity (1 Corinthians 15:35–49).

Christians can have the utmost confidence in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus since God’s Word accurately tells us about these historical events. These central truths of the Christian faith were also witnessed by hundreds of people. Jesus was publicly executed on a cross (Matthew

27:32–50), buried in Joseph’s tomb (Mark 15:42–47), and seen alive again by more than 500 people at the same time (1 Corinthians 15:6).

The resurrection showed clearly that Jesus Christ had the power to destroy death—the last enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). This realization made the enemies of God shudder at the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. But what could they do now that Jesus was alive again? The only thing they could do was seek to discredit the resurrection. And that they quickly did. The Bible tells us that the chief priests and elders paid a large sum of money to the soldiers who had been guarding the tomb to fund the lie that Jesus’ disciples had stolen the body of Jesus while the guards slept (Matthew 28:11–15). From that first week after his death even to this day, those who refuse to submit to the lordship of Christ have invented many arguments to try and explain away the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

While the Bible speaks of Jesus showing himself by many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3), we must acknowledge that we do not have tangible access to those proofs today. But what we have is the record of all these things and more in the inspired, inerrant Word of God. We can trust all of God’s Word, including the accounts of the resurrection.

Historical/Apologetics Background

Jesus himself mentioned in the account of the rich man and Lazarus that unbelievers will not be convinced even though one would rise from the dead (Luke 16:31). Belief in Jesus Christ comes through the witness of Scripture and the illumination of the Holy Spirit and not from convincing arguments. To believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he bore God’s wrath for sin on the cross, and that he rose victorious over death requires more than a convincing argument or intellectual agreement of historical facts. The Apostle Paul knew this and witnessed it frequently as he traveled and shared the good news of Jesus Christ. He spoke to many and was only too aware that the message of the cross was foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved, that message is the power of God for salvation (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Ever since Jesus rose from the dead, skeptics have concocted various proposals attempting to explain away the truth of the resurrection. For example, it has been claimed that the person on the cross was not Jesus. Muslims often claim that Judas took Jesus’ place on the cross and Jesus was instead taken to heaven (Quran 4:157–158). Consequently, if Jesus never died, he was surely never resurrected. But even the text of the Quran is self-refuting since it claims that the Jews were boasting that they killed the Messiah.

The Gospel of Barnabas claimed that Judas appeared, and the disciples thought it was Jesus. However, this work is considered a false gospel (pseudepigrapha), and the earliest manuscripts are from the 1500s. While some did not recognize Jesus after the resurrection, the Bible makes it clear that he appeared to many.

Another common rejection is to either deny that Jesus ever existed or to say the teachings on the resurrection were developed later as mythical components of the Christian teachings. But this explanation is problematic because there is no serious scholar who rejects that Jesus actually existed (though they reject he is God), and the manuscript evidence does not support such a claim, with the resurrection being described in the earliest of writings from the church fathers. Another claim by skeptics is that Jesus just appeared to die on the cross, so there really wasn't a resurrection, just a reviving of a wounded man. But Jesus was scourged, hung on a cross for six hours, had a spear thrust into his side, was buried in a tomb behind a giant rock, and then walked out of the tomb a few days later, not looking any worse for the wear, and convinced his disciples that he was the resurrected Lord of glory.

Other ideas such as a mass hallucination, a séance, an apparition or spirit appearing to the disciples, and even alien visitations are all attempts to suppress the truth of the resurrection and the lordship of Christ.

These dismissals of God's Word should be addressed. Often, the objections are not difficult to answer if we are prepared and familiar with the different opinions we may be confronted with. However, we must keep in mind that in many of these cases, the skeptics will accept a few scraps of evidence for a pagan god and will not accept the truthfulness of the Bible. As believers, we should rejoice that God has revealed the truth to those of us who are being saved (1 Corinthians 1:18). And with that divine revelation of the truth comes the privilege and responsibility to open our Bibles and proclaim the truth.

Slide #1

- ▶ After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

Come On In

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

Memory Verse

Practice the memory verse using the Memory Verse Poster and a memory verse game.

Slide #2

Matthew 28:6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Studying God's Word

Introduction

Before class, write the following true/false statements (or your own) on separate pieces of paper: 1. The sun gives us light. 2. We live on Mars. 3. Living things die. 4. Dogs can talk. 5. A knife can cut you. 6. Trees have legs.

We're going to read some sentences. If we know the sentence is true, we'll give the thumbs up sign and attach it to the wall/board. If we know it's false, we'll give the thumbs down sign and toss it in the trash. Ready? Here's the first one. *Read statement #1.*

- ▶ Have tape or poster putty available.

- ? **Is that true or false?** *True. Attach statement to the wall/board. Continue reading the statements and letting students give the thumbs up or down sign. Either you or your students may attach the true statements and throw the false ones in the trash. Numbers 1, 3, and 5 are true. Numbers 2, 4, and 6 are false.*
- ? **How did you know which sentences were true?** *Allow discussion. We know from experience.*
- ? **Now I'm going to read one more statement: Jesus rose from the dead. Is that true or false?** *True.*
- ? **We're all here today celebrating that fact, aren't we? That's what Easter is about. But how do you know that statement is true?** *Allow answers.*
- ? **Today, we're going to find evidence, or proof, that Jesus really died and rose from the dead. Where do you think we should look for the evidence?** *The Bible.*

Right. The Bible is God's Word to us, so we know that it's true. God would never lie to us because he is holy and perfect.

Proof of Jesus' Death

- ? **The Bible tells us that Jesus was crucified on a cross to save sinners. What does it mean to be crucified—to die by crucifixion?** *Allow answers.*

Crucifixion was a way the Romans killed criminals, such as murderers and thieves. The person was nailed by the hands and feet to a wooden cross and left there until he died. It was a slow and extremely painful death.

The Bible also tells us that Jesus never did anything wrong. So how did he end up being punished on a cross like a criminal? You see, the Jewish religious leaders were jealous of Jesus because the people listened to him and because he could perform miracles. They arrested Jesus and put him on trial. They said he should die for saying he was God.

But the Jews weren't allowed to put anyone to death because they were ruled by the Romans. So, the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. He knew Jesus had done nothing wrong, but he was afraid the Jews would cause trouble if he let Jesus go. So, Pilate ordered that Jesus be crucified.

John 19:28–34

 Slides #3–5

All four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, give us the facts about Jesus' death. Let's read what John says happened there that day.

- ? Turn to John chapter 19. Who will read verses 28–30? *Choose readers.*
- ? What a horrible scene! As Jesus hung on the cross, he became thirsty. What did the soldiers offer him to drink? *Sour wine.*
- ? After he received the wine, what did Jesus say right before he died? Look in verse 30. *"It is finished."*
- ? What do you think Jesus meant? What was finished? *Allow discussion.*

Jesus was finished taking the punishment we deserve for our sins. He stayed on the cross until his work of salvation for sinners was completed, then he gave up his spirit to die. Jesus is God, so his death was his choice.

Listen as I read verses 31–32. *Read the verses.* Since the next day was a special Sabbath Day, the Jews wanted all those who had been crucified to be taken down from the crosses quickly. So, the soldiers broke their legs to speed up their deaths.

- ? Let's find out what happened when the soldiers came to Jesus. Who would like to read verses 33–34? *Choose readers.*
- ? Why did the soldiers not break Jesus' legs? *They saw he was already dead.*
- ? What did one soldier do instead? *He pierced Jesus' side with a spear.*

Show the Lesson Poster. When the soldier stabbed a spear into Jesus' side, blood and water came out, which showed without a doubt that Jesus was already dead.

 Slide #6

- ? Let's begin the Class Notes. Each sentence is like a piece of evidence, or proof, of what happened. Use the pictures as clues then unscramble the word that completes each sentence. Who would like to read #1? *Choose a reader. Cross. Have students complete #1.*

► Pass out the Class Notes

 Slide #7

Slide #8

John 19:35

John was a disciple and close friend of Jesus who watched the crucifixion and wrote down what he saw. When you tell what you know about something, it's called a testimony. Someone read what John said about his testimony in verse 35. *Choose a reader.*

- ? What did John say about his testimony? *His testimony is true.*
- ? How did John know what happened that day? *He was there.*

John was there at Jesus' crucifixion. He saw how Jesus died and then was pierced with a spear. John also wrote about other people, like Jesus' mother, who were there at Jesus' death and about the two men who took Jesus' body and buried it in a new tomb.

Slide #9

- ? Who will read and complete #2 on the Class Notes? *Choose a reader. Family. Have students complete #2.*

Proof of Jesus' Resurrection

John leaves no doubt that Jesus died on the cross and that he was buried.

Slides #10–13

Matthew 28:1–10

Now let's read about what happened on the third day after Jesus died. Turn to Matthew 28, and let's begin with verses 1–3. *Choose readers.*

Two women, both named Mary, were going to see Jesus' tomb early on Sunday morning. They had been followers of Jesus and were going to prepare his body with spices.

- ? But what happened at the tomb? *There was a great earthquake.*
- ? What caused the earthquake? *An angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled the stone away from the tomb.*
- ? What did the angel look like? *Like lightning, with clothes as white as snow.*

Let's read verse 4 to find out what else happened. *Choose a reader.*

- ? Who else was at the tomb? *Guards.*
- ? Roman guards had been placed at the tomb to make sure no one got in. What did they do when they saw the angel? *They trembled and became like dead men.*

These tough Roman guards were so afraid that they were shaking and couldn't speak or move—they might have even fainted.

Now look at verses 5–7. The angel had a very important message for these women. Part of their message, verse 6, is our memory verse. I'll begin reading with verse 5. But when I get to verse 6, everyone needs

to read the memory verse with me. *Read verse 5 aloud. Refer to the Memory Verse Poster. Have students read the verse together. Then continue to read verse 7.*

- ? What good news did the angel give the women about Jesus? *Jesus was not there; he had risen! He was alive.*
- ? The angel had rolled away the stone so that the women could see the empty tomb. They knew Jesus was alive, and they ran to tell the disciples, just as the angel told them to do. But on their way, the women had an even greater surprise. They met someone. Who do you think it was? *Allow answers.*

Let's read verses 8–10 to find out. *Choose readers.*

- ? *Show the Lesson Poster.* Jesus appeared to them! Imagine what that must have been like to see Jesus alive again! What do you think you would have done if you had been there? *Allow discussion.*

 Slide #14

The women worshipped at Jesus' feet. He told them not to be afraid but to go and give a message to the disciples (his brothers).

Matthew 28:11–15

 Slides #15–16

- ? The women weren't the only ones who knew the tomb was empty. Who else was there to see the angel roll away the stone? *The guards.*

Remember, the guards had been terrified by the angel. Listen carefully to Matthew 28:11–15 to find out what they did next. *Read the verses.*

Some of the guards were worried about getting in trouble because their job was to make sure that no one broke into the tomb to take Jesus' body. And now the tomb was empty! They went to the Jewish leaders (chief priests) and told them what happened.

- ? What did the chief priests tell the guards to do? *Reread verse 13 if necessary. Tell people that the disciples came and stole Jesus' body while they were sleeping.*

No one could disagree that Jesus' body was gone, and the priests knew that Jesus had said he would rise on the third day. But they didn't want people believing in Jesus, so they paid the guards to spread a lie about what happened. Even Jesus' enemies knew the tomb was empty.

- ? Look at #3 on the Class Notes. Who can read this proof of the resurrection with its correct answer? *Choose a reader. Tomb. Have students complete #3.*

 Slide #17

When the women told the disciples they had seen Jesus, the disciples didn't believe them at first. But the Bible tells us that Jesus appeared to his disciples and let them see the wounds in his hands and side. He ate meals with them to show that he was alive in a real body and wasn't a ghost or part of their imagination. For 40 days after his resurrection, Jesus spoke to his disciples and appeared to many other followers.

- ? Let's finish the Class Notes. Look at #4. Who would like to read and find the correct match? *Choose a reader. Hands. Have students complete #4.*

 Slide #18

- ▶ Have the Resurrection Proofs taped to the wall or board. Have tape or poster putty available.

Slide #19

- ▶ Have False Ideas taped underneath students' chairs.

- ❓ **And who would like to complete the last one, #5?** *Choose a reader. People. Have students complete #5.*

Before Jesus went back to heaven, he told his followers to be witnesses and tell people about everything they had seen and heard. Sometime after Jesus went up into heaven, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak boldly about Jesus. They knew the truth that Jesus had died on the cross to pay for their sins and had risen again to give them eternal life.

Let's review the evidence we found for Jesus' death and resurrection. Choose five students to come remove the Resurrection Proofs from the wall. Have them stand in front of the class and read the proofs in order. Then let them tape the papers back on the wall with the words showing.

False Ideas

Like the disciples, we also know that Jesus rose from the dead. But many people do not want to believe it, so they have come up with false ideas to explain away the resurrection. Some of you have a piece of paper taped underneath your chair. Look now to see if you do. Remove it carefully without tearing it. Allow students to look underneath chairs and remove papers.

As we read each one of these false ideas, we're going to decide which pieces of evidence prove that they are wrong.

- ❓ **Who has False Idea #1?** *Allow student to read. Jesus did not really die.*
- ❓ **Refer to the Resurrection Proofs on the board. Which proofs show this idea to be false?** *Proofs #1 and #2.*

Yes. Jesus' friends and family watched him die. But some people still say that Jesus only passed out on the cross then later woke up and walked out of the tomb.

- ❓ **Does that make sense?** *No.*

We talked a bit about crucifixion. It was so horrible and painful, no one could live through it.

- ❓ **Also, what did we read in John's Gospel about the soldiers who came to break Jesus' legs? Why didn't they break his legs?** *They could see that Jesus was already dead.*

- ❓ **And what did one soldier do with the spear?** *Pierced Jesus' side with it.*

Right. Jesus was definitely dead.

Let's read False Idea #2. Allow student to read. *It was not Jesus on the cross.*

- ❓ **Some say it was only someone who looked like Jesus. Which pieces of evidence prove that it was Jesus and no one else on the cross?** *Proofs #2, #4, and #5.*

- ? Jesus' friends and family—especially his own mother—would not have mistaken someone else for Jesus. After he rose from the dead, many of his followers saw him and recognized him. And what did Jesus show his disciples to prove that he had risen from the dead? *The nail marks in his hands and the spear wound in his side.*

We're ready for False Idea #3. Allow student to read. *Someone stole or moved Jesus' body.*

- ? Look at Proof #3. Who saw that the tomb was empty? *The women and the guards.*

Matthew told us exactly how this false idea began, so we know that it isn't true. The Jewish leaders told the guards to spread the rumor that the disciples stole Jesus' body.

- ? Who has False Idea #4? Allow student to read. *People only imagined that they saw Jesus alive again. Which proof do you think shows this idea can't be true? Proof #5.*

- ? We read that the risen Jesus appeared to whom? *The women and his disciples.*

The Bible also tells us that he appeared to over 500 people over 40 days before he returned to heaven. It's impossible for that many people to imagine the same thing—especially in different places and at different times.

- ? Who has the last False Idea, #5? Allow student to read. *The resurrection is just a story that writers made up years later.*

- ? Let's think about Proof #3 again. Who came to the empty tomb first and then met the risen Jesus on the way? *The women.*

Yes. Jesus first appeared to women, not to his disciples or to the Jewish leaders. In Jesus' day, people thought women were not as important as men and often would not believe them. So, it would have been a bit embarrassing to admit that Jesus appeared first to women instead of to the men.

If you were making up a story, would you make up a story that embarrassed you? Of course, not. The same is true for the Gospel writers. If they had made up the story, they would have said that Jesus appeared to the men first, not the women. This proof is a great piece of evidence that the writers were telling the truth.

- ? Don't some of these false ideas seem silly? When you know the evidence from God's Word, these ideas sound as silly as some of the false statements we read at the beginning of class. What did we do with those false statements? *Threw them in the trash.*

Now, I want you to do the same thing with these false ideas. Allow students with the false idea papers to wad them up and throw them in the trash can.

Application

Refer to the Lesson Poster. No matter how many false ideas people make up to say the resurrection didn't happen, we know it is true. The Bible gives us the proof for Jesus' death and resurrection. It's important to know what the Bible says so that we can show people from God's Word what really happened. Those who saw Jesus die and who saw him after he'd risen wrote about it. They wanted all people to know that these events are true and to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. The resurrection shows that Jesus is God; when he came to life again, he conquered death for us.

- ? Because we have God's Word, we can know for sure that Jesus died and rose again to save us from sin. What do you think God wants us to do because of this truth? *Allow answers.*
- ? What did the women do when they met Jesus and knew that he had risen? *They fell at his feet and worshipped.*

They recognized Jesus as their Savior and Lord. And that is what God wants us to do, too. If you have never told Jesus that you want him to be your Savior, you can trust in him today. Easter is a wonderful time to become a child of God.



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

- Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.

- Thank God for the accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection in the Bible.
- Ask God for help to read and study his Word to learn more about him and his Son, Jesus.



Review Game—Bible Baseball

We encourage you to play the following review game.

Materials

Review Questions

One die

Masking tape or chairs for bases

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Set up three bases, home plate, and the pitcher's mound using masking tape or chairs arranged in a diamond with the pitcher's mound in the middle.

Divide the class into two teams. Have the first team line up at home plate. The other team may wait in their seats or stand along the “sideline.”

The student at bat will roll the die to determine the “hit” based on the list below (which you may want to write on the board for easy reference). A walk means he can go to first base without answering a question. A foul ball means to roll again. Three foul balls in a row is a strike!

Dice rolls—1=single; 2=double; 3=triple; 4=home run; 5=walk; 6=foul ball

Once the hit is determined (#1–4), ask a review question from the pitcher’s mound. If the student answers correctly, he can advance around the bases according to his roll. If he answers incorrectly, it is a strike for his team, and he goes to the back of the line. After three strikes, a team is out. Unless they strike out, allow all team members to come to bat once and then switch teams at bat.

Remember that the hits will move any team members who are already on base. For example, if a student is on second base and the next teammate rolls a double and answers a question correctly, the student on second goes to home plate and scores a run for the team while the batter goes to second base.

Keep the game moving by having students roll quickly when they come to bat and “run” the bases for each correct answer. Keep track of strikes and runs for each team. Play for a set number of innings or as time allows, repeating questions as necessary.

