



THE CROSS & RESURRECTION

1st-3rd Grade • Easter Lesson • April 5, 2026

Concept

Jesus is not dead – He’s alive!

Goal

Students will learn that they need forgiveness for their sin, and Jesus’ crucifixion is the solution. His resurrection is the proof that His death paid for our sins. We can be confident that Jesus really did rise from the dead because there is good evidence for the resurrection!

Passage

Matthew 27:11-28:10, Mark 15:1-16:8

Key Verse: “The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.” Matthew 28:5-6

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>12 numbered plastic eggs</i> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bible, 1/class• Dry erase marker, 1/class <p>Learning Activity #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Adam Raccoon at Forever Falls, Glen Keane</i> <p>Optional Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Plastic Easter Eggs with cross inside (~36)</i>• <i>Easter Eggs empty (3)</i>• <i>3 buckets</i>• <i>Gaffers Tape</i>	<p>Learning Activity #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sand art cross kit (1/student)• Table clothes

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

1st-3rd Grade • Easter Lesson • April 20, 2025

The children have heard much this year about the benefit of the cross and Christ's death for them. However, the resurrection is the great hope of the believer. It is the guarantee of the completion of Jesus' earthly work and His restoration to His heavenly position.

DEFINITION: Christ rose bodily from the dead, resulting in an empty grave... While Christ's resurrected body was in some ways different, it was the same material body as the one he had before his death (Lk. 24:39). Therefore, the interpretation that Jesus' resurrected body was completely different than his previous body, or that the resurrection was only spiritual, or that it was only the imagination of the apostles is unacceptable.

IMPORTANCE: The resurrection validates the authority and truthfulness of Jesus and his message (Mt. 12:39,40; Jn. 2:19; see also Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:14). Jesus made a unique claim for himself (that he was the Messiah), and he offered to provide unique evidence for those claims (that he would be resurrected). If Jesus was not raised from the dead, he was a false messiah, the apostles were liars, and Christians are fools to be pitied.

It objectively demonstrates our forgiveness (Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:17; 1 Pet. 1:3). In the Old Testament, the fact that the High Priest emerged alive from the Holy of Holies demonstrated that the sacrifice had been accepted by God. If his sacrifice had been unacceptable, he would have been killed (Lev. 16:1,2). In the same way, Jesus' resurrection demonstrated that his death was fully accepted by the Father as payment for our sins.

It guarantees the believer's future resurrection (1 Cor. 15:18-23). Paul refers to Jesus' resurrection as the "first fruits" (vs. 20,23). This is a reference to the Old Testament Festival of First Fruits. The earliest fruits were tangible evidence that God would grant them a full harvest. In the same way, Paul says that Jesus' resurrection is the tangible evidence that we will be resurrected at his coming (the Rapture).

It assures the believer's position in Christ (Rom. 6:4,5; Eph. 1:20,21; 2:6). Paul argues that Christians have been freed from the authority of sin and Satan. This is because Jesus overcame both of them through his death and resurrection, and we have been united with him in his resurrection. Obviously, if Jesus was not resurrected, Christians have no authority over sin or Satan.[1]

[1] "Http:\www.xenos.org," Christian Principles, Unit 1, Week 10: Christology.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

Introduction Lg. Group

The day of class:

- Hide the plastic eggs around the room and remember where they are.

Activity Station:

- **The Easter Story in Eggs**
- **Instructions:** Send the kids out to find the hidden eggs. When they are all found, use the contents of the eggs to share the Easter story with the children. Elaborate on the contents of each egg to connect each to the events of the last week of Jesus' life.
 - **Palm branch:** Palm Sunday parade – Jesus rode into Jerusalem and all the people waved their palm branches saying, “Hosanna! Great is Jesus. He is King.”
 - **Bread (croutons):** Last Supper – “Jesus had His last dinner with His friends. He gave them each some bread and said, “This is my body given for you.”
 - **Three dimes:** Some mean men gave Judas 30 pieces of silver to give Jesus to them.
 - **Purple fabric:** When the mean men made fun of Jesus, they put a purple King's robe on Jesus.
 - **Thorn:** Then the mean men put a crown of sharp thorns on Jesus' head.
 - **Nail:** Then the mean men hammered nails into Jesus' hands and feet.
 - **Cross:** Jesus was nailed to the cross where He died.
 - **Die (dice):** Have you ever used dice to play a game? The soldiers rolled the dice like in a game to see who would win Jesus' clothes
 - **Sponge:** Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” Have any of you ever had vinegar to drink? It is very sour. Soldiers put vinegar on a sponge and gave it to Jesus to help his thirst.
 - **Spice (cloves, cinnamon):** After Jesus died, the men took his body off the cross. The women rubbed spices on Jesus' body. They wrapped His body in cloths and took him to the tomb.
 - **Stone:** They rolled a VERY BIG stone up to the opening in the tomb. They all went away and were very, very sad because their friend, Jesus, was dead. But the next day when they went back to His tomb the stone was rolled away.
 - **Empty:** Then when they looked in the tomb, Jesus wasn't there. Jesus is not dead – He's alive!

Jesus was crucified on a cross to pay for our sins. But he didn't stay dead! 3 days later, the tomb was empty! He resurrected to prove that he defeated death. But many people think that this resurrection story is too good to be true. Today we'll look at 4 explanations for the resurrection. Which one do you think is most likely to be true?

Instructions: Read Mark 16:1-7 with the class first.

Utilize the white board to explain the 4 different explanations for the resurrection. Try to make it interactive by asking questions.

IS THE RESURRECTION A MYTH?

Have you ever played a game of telephone? Some people believe that, like telephone, the story of Jesus changed over time as it was passed down from generation to generation. Some people just say that Jesus rising from the dead was just a myth! Can anyone tell me what a myth is? (*a widely held but false belief or idea*)

But this isn't the case! We have 4 eyewitness accounts of Jesus' resurrection written within a generation of His death.

DID JESUS NOT ACTUALLY DIE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

Even non-Christian historians agree that Jesus died on the cross. The Romans who crucified Jesus knew what they were doing. Even if Jesus did survive the cross, he couldn't survive in the tomb for 3 days, and he wouldn't have the strength to escape the tomb.

DID THE DISCIPLES CREATE A LIE?

Some believe the disciples stole Jesus's body from the tomb to trick people into thinking He rose from the dead. To steal the body, the disciples would have had to fight off the Roman guards who guarded the tomb. But this didn't happen. The body just disappeared.

The disciples died for their belief in Jesus and his resurrection. Why would they choose to die for something you knew was a lie? That would not make sense!

ACTUAL RESURRECTION!

Jesus truly did rise from the dead because He is the Son of God!

Because of this, we can trust that Jesus will give us life after death, too!

Let's get into small groups to talk and pray about this.

We celebrate Jesus being alive because it shows that God's plan really worked! Jesus fixed the hole that we have in our lives – our bad choices – by dying on the cross for us. When we ask God for his forgiveness through Jesus, His death will pay the price for our sin so we can be with God forever. We know God's plan DID work because Jesus is not dead – He's alive!

- Why might it be hard for some people to believe that Jesus actually rose from the dead?
- What do you think about these other explanations for the resurrection?
- Which one do you think makes the most sense? Why?

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Sm. Groups

Learning Activity #1 Continued

Let's pray together and thank God for His plan. Let's thank Him that Jesus is not dead, but that he rose from the dead! He is alive!
(Make sure to ask the students if they have any questions about the lesson)

Transition

Let's make a craft to help us remember that Jesus is not dead – He is alive!

Learning Activity #2 Lg. Group

Craft – Sandart Cross

Instructions: Use table clothes to cover table and collect spilled sand. Give each child a sand art cross kit to complete. As the children work, talk about Jesus' great love – that He would die for us, and God's amazing power – that He could bring Jesus back to life to show us that our bad choices and sins can be forgiven.

Transition

If you would like to read a story, come with me.

Learning Activity #3 Lg. Group

Read Adam Raccoon at Forever Falls.

- Who does Adam remind you of?
- How is King Aren like Jesus?

Optional Activities

Option 1: Alive Tag

Supplies: None

Have the children line up along one wall. Identify a “safe zone.” Choose one child to be “It” and to stand in the middle of the room. On “Go” have “It” stand completely still (as if dead or asleep) while the other children walk quietly around him, whispering, “Are you alive?” Whenever “It” wants, he can yell out “I’m alive!” and tries to tag as many children as possible before they get to the safe zone. Anyone “It” tags becomes “It” also. Have all children who are “It” spread out in the room. The game continues as before, but now the original “It” yells “We’re alive” when it’s time to run and tag people. Play continues until one child remains. That person becomes “It” for the next round.

From the Biggest Story Curriculum, volume 4, Crossway

Option 2: Empty Tomb Relay

Supplies & Prep: Plastic eggs with cross paper in them and a few that are empty. 2-3 buckets. Fill buckets (1 for each team) with cross filled eggs and 1 single empty egg. Place buckets on one side of the room.

Divide the children into teams, and have them line up opposite a bucket. The first child on each team must jump (or run, skip, etc) down to her team's bucket and open an egg. If the egg has a cross in it, she must close the egg (with cross paper inside), return it to the bucket, and run back to tag the next person, who repeats the process. The first team to find and return the empty egg wins. Remind the children that Jesus's tomb was empty because Jesus rose from the dead!

From the Biggest Story Curriculum, volume 4, Crossway

Option 3: In the Tomb, Out of the Tomb, Bridge

Supplies & Prep: Gaffer's tape. Use tape to make a line down the center of the room.

Have children stand with one leg on each side of the line. Explain that the way they are standing will be called "bridge." Identify one side of the line as "in the tomb" and the other side as "out of the tomb." A leader calls out "in the tomb," "out of the tomb," or "bridge," and children jump with two feet to the side or position that is called. If bridge is called, children jump to have one foot on each side of the line. If a child jumps to the wrong side or position, he is out and must sit to the side. The leader continues calling out the phrases in random order, calling out more quickly the less people there are in the game. The last child standing wins. Remind children that Jesus's death and resurrection provided a way (bridge) for us to be with God.

From the Biggest Story Curriculum, volume 4, Crossway