

It's Empty!

LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Scripture: John 20:2

Memory Verse: So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' - John 20:2

The Children's Sermon

As you can see, I have a glass with some juice in it. There are two ways of looking at this glass of juice. Some people would look at the glass and say it is half empty. There are others who would look at the glass and say it is half full. (Drink all of the juice in the glass.)

Well, we solved that problem, didn't we? Now everyone who looks at this glass would say that it is empty, but guess what? Everyone still wouldn't look at the glass in the same way. Some would look at the glass and grumble and complain because it empty. Others would look at the glass and see it as a glass just waiting to be filled with good things to drink. I guess there are always different ways to look at any situation.

On the Sunday morning after Jesus was crucified, a woman named Mary went to visit the grave where the body of Jesus had been laid. When she got there, she found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb. She ran to find someone to tell them what she had seen. She found two of the disciples, Peter and John, and she said to

them, "They have taken our Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they have put him."

The three of them immediately ran to the tomb. When they got there, they all saw the same thing, but they didn't all look at it in the same way.

Peter looked and was curious. The Bible says Peter went in the empty tomb and looked around. He saw strips of linen laying around and the cloth that Jesus had been buried in folded neatly and placed where the body had been. "Hmmm, very interesting," Peter might have said to himself.

Mary looked and was sad. The Bible tells us that Mary didn't even go inside the empty tomb. She just stood outside the tomb and wept because she feared that someone had stolen the body of Jesus.

John looked and believed. The bible says that John went inside the tomb and he saw and believed. Now, I don't know exactly how much John understood, but I think he believed that Jesus had risen from the grave just as he said he would.

Three people – they all saw the same thing – one was curious, one was sad, and one believed. I think that is pretty much the same way people react to the story of Jesus today. Some people hear the story and they are curious, others hear it and think it is sad, others hear it and believe. How do you look at it?

Let's imagine a bit more about that special morning. The sun was just coming up, and the birds were starting to sing. It was a new day, but for Mary, Peter, and John, it felt

like the saddest day ever. They missed Jesus so much. But something amazing was about to happen at the empty tomb.

When Peter stepped into the empty tomb, his eyes opened wide. He saw the linens but no Jesus. "Where could He be?" Peter wondered. He scratched his head, thinking hard. The empty tomb was a big puzzle he wanted to solve.

Mary, standing outside, was crying. Her heart felt so heavy. She loved Jesus so much and now she couldn't even say goodbye. But the empty tomb was more than just a place of sadness. It was the start of something new, something full of hope.

John, when he saw the empty tomb, felt something warm in his heart. It was like a little light turned on. "Could it be true? Did Jesus really do what He said He would?" John thought. He remembered Jesus talking about rising again. The empty tomb was starting to make sense to him.

The empty tomb wasn't just an empty space. It was a message from Jesus. He was telling everyone, "I am alive! I have beaten death!" This is what we call the Empty Tomb Resurrection. It's a big word, but it means Jesus came back to life, and because of that, we can all have hope.

The Empty Tomb Resurrection is like the first flower blooming after a long, cold winter. It's a sign that good things are coming. Jesus defeating death means we can all be friends with God forever. That's the best news ever!

Now, think about how you feel when you hear about the Empty Tomb Resurrection. Are you like Peter, full of questions and wanting to learn more? Or maybe you're like Mary,

feeling a bit sad but also hopeful. Or are you like John, believing and feeling happy in your heart?

This is a story for everyone. It doesn't matter if you're curious, sad, or believing. Jesus loves all of us. He wants us to know that He is always with us, and because He lives, we can face tomorrow with a smile.

So, next time you hear about the Empty Tomb, remember it's not just an old story. It's about Jesus, who loves us so much that He came back to life. It's about hope, love, and the promise of being with God forever.

Dear Lord, today we look into an empty grave. Help us all to see and believe that Jesus has risen just as he said he would. Help us to remember the Empty Tomb Resurrection every day, to feel the hope it brings, and to share that hope with others. Amen.

Remember, the Empty Tomb is not the end of the story. It's just the beginning. It's the start of a beautiful friendship with Jesus, who is always with us, loving us, and guiding us.

Bible Memory Verse

So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' - John 20:2

You Will Need:

-Construction paper

-Scissors

-Markers or crayons

Get Ready:

- Cut the construction paper into large tombstone shapes, one for each child.
- Write the memory verse on a sample tombstone to show as an example.

Do This:

1. Give each child a tombstone-shaped piece of construction paper and markers or crayons.
2. Ask them to decorate their tombstone with the memory verse, adding flowers, crosses, or any other designs they like.
3. Once everyone is done, have a 'gallery walk' where the children can show their tombstones and recite the memory verse. This helps them remember the story of Jesus' resurrection and the importance of sharing the news, just like Mary did.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A large cardboard box (to make a pretend tomb)
- Stone-shaped paper cutouts (to block the tomb entrance)
- Flashlight (to represent the angel)
- Fabric pieces or simple cloths (to represent grave clothes)
- A small, empty box (to represent the empty tomb)
- Picture of Jesus (to represent the risen Christ)

Get Ready:

1. Create a "tomb" by opening the large cardboard box on one side. Place it against a wall to keep it upright.

2. Place the stone-shaped paper cutouts in front of the tomb entrance, but don't block it completely yet.
3. Hide the flashlight, fabric pieces, and the picture of Jesus nearby but out of immediate sight.

Do this:

1. ****Discover the Empty Tomb****: Invite the children to roll away the stone (remove the paper cutouts) and look inside the "tomb" using the flashlight. They'll find it empty except for the small box (empty tomb) and fabric pieces.
2. ****Angel's Message****: Turn on the flashlight and shine it toward the ceiling or a wall to represent the angel. Explain that an angel told Mary that Jesus was not there because He has risen, just like He said.
3. ****Meeting Jesus****: Hide the picture of Jesus somewhere in the room while the children are exploring the tomb. After they hear about the angel's message, send them on a mission to find Jesus, explaining that just like Mary and the disciples, we can find Jesus in our lives because He is alive.
4. ****Reflection****: Once they find the picture of Jesus, gather the children and reflect on the story. Emphasize that Jesus is alive and because He lives, we can have hope and joy. Encourage them to share how they feel knowing that Jesus loves them so much that He came back to life for them.

Snack Activity: Empty Tomb Rolls

You'll Need:

- 1 can of crescent roll dough
- 8 large marshmallows
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon sugar

- A small bowl
- A baking sheet
- Parchment paper

Get Ready: Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C) and line your baking sheet with parchment paper.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that the marshmallow represents Jesus, pure and sinless (white). The crescent roll represents the tomb.
2. Dip a marshmallow in melted butter, which represents the oils of embalming. Then roll it in the cinnamon sugar, symbolizing the spices used to anoint the body.
3. Place the marshmallow in the center of a crescent roll piece, wrap it up, and seal the edges tight so the marshmallow is completely covered. This is like the sealed tomb.
4. Place the rolls on the baking sheet and bake for 10-12 minutes, until they're golden brown. While they bake, read John 20:2 together and discuss how Mary Magdalene found the tomb empty on the first day of the week, just like the inside of the rolls will be after baking.
5. Once the rolls are done, let them cool for a minute. When you open them, the marshmallow will have melted, leaving the tomb empty. This represents Jesus' resurrection and the empty tomb.

Game Activity: Resurrection Run

You'll Need:

- Sidewalk chalk
- Small stones or beanbags

- Pictures of symbols representing the story of Jesus' resurrection (e.g., cross, empty tomb, angel, etc.)

Get Ready: Draw a large hopscotch grid on the sidewalk or pavement. Instead of numbers in each square, place a picture or symbol that represents different parts of the Easter story, including one for John 20:2 (perhaps an empty tomb or a picture of Mary Magdalene).

Do this:

1. Each child takes a turn tossing a stone or beanbag onto the hopscotch grid. They must hop through the grid, but they can only step on squares that relate to the resurrection story. If the stone lands on the empty tomb (John 20:2), they share what they know about the story of Jesus' resurrection before hopping.
2. Once they reach the end of the grid, they hop back, picking up their stone or beanbag on the way back without stepping on any lines.
3. After everyone has had a turn, gather the children and briefly retell the story of Jesus' resurrection, emphasizing the significance of the empty tomb and what it means for Christians today.

Craft Activity: Empty Tomb Garden

You'll Need:

- A small clay pot
- Potting soil
- Grass seeds or small plant
- A large stone
- Small pebbles or decorative stones
- Craft sticks and markers

Get Ready: Gather all your materials on a workspace that can get a little dirty. This craft is a bit messy but a lot of fun!

Do this:

1. Fill your clay pot about three-quarters full with potting soil.
2. Plant the grass seeds or a small plant in the center of the pot. This represents the garden where Jesus was buried.
3. Place the large stone on one side of the pot, partially covering the soil. This is the stone that was rolled away from Jesus' tomb.
4. Scatter small pebbles or decorative stones around the plant to decorate your garden.
5. Use craft sticks and markers to create a small sign that says 'He is Risen' and plant it in the soil.
6. Water your garden and place it in a sunny spot. As you care for your garden, remember the story of Jesus' resurrection and the joy of Easter.

Prayer Activity: Rolling Away the Stone: A

You'll Need:

- Small stones (one for each child)
- Permanent markers
- A large bowl or basket

Get Ready: Place the stones in the center of the table where the children can easily reach them. Have the markers ready.

Do this:

1. Start by telling the children about John 20:2, explaining how Mary Magdalene found the tomb empty because Jesus had risen. Emphasize the joy and surprise she must have felt discovering that Jesus was alive.
2. Explain that sometimes we have worries or things that make us sad, just like the stone made it hard to see Jesus. Ask each child to think of something that is worrying them or making them sad and write it on their stone with a marker.
3. Once everyone has written on their stones, invite the children to come forward one by one and place their stones in the bowl or basket. As they do, lead them in a prayer, asking Jesus to help roll away their worries and sadness, just like the stone was rolled away from His tomb. Finish by celebrating that Jesus is alive and He cares for us.