



Session

7



THE EASTER STORY

Luke 23; 24:1-12

Following Jesus' reception in Jerusalem, the crowds that cheered His arrival would soon turn away from Him. Jesus was not surprised by this because it was exactly what God had planned for Jesus.

Luke began by sharing several stories of Jesus' interactions while in Jerusalem. Each of these stories gave more fuel to the extreme anger the Pharisees now had for Jesus. Every time Jesus did something else that hinted at His deity, the religious leaders became more and more angry. Finally, the religious leaders had had enough and set in motion a plot to kill Jesus. They found a conspirator from among Jesus' own disciples—Judas Iscariot. Judas conspired with the Pharisees and agreed to betray Jesus.

With Judas set on betrayal, he joined Jesus and the other disciples in an upper room where the Passover meal had been prepared. Jesus sat with His twelve disciples and shared a special symbolic meal, one that would later be done in remembrance of the sacrifice Jesus was about to make. Judas took part in this special service and then left to fulfill his commitment to the Pharisees.

Later that evening, Jesus and His disciples gathered in the garden called Gethsemane. This garden was located on the Mount of Olives and gave an overhead view of the city of Jerusalem. In the garden, Jesus prayed for God's plan to be fulfilled just as God desired. Jesus fully submitted to God's plan. When Jesus finished praying, Judas arrived and fulfilled what he promised by betraying Jesus.

Recall our study of Psalm 22. The psalm that David wrote nearly 1,000 years before this event was about to become fulfilled Scripture. Jesus was treated badly by the temple police, He was condemned to death, and finally hung on the cross where He died. As further fulfillment of Scripture and as concrete proof that Jesus was the promised Messiah, God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day.

SESSION FOCUS

TEXT TRUTH

Jesus is alive.

BIBLE STORY

Luke 23; 24:1-12

BIBLE VERSE

Luke 24:6a

CHRIST IN CONTEXT

The Book of Luke gives a detailed description of the life of Jesus. Luke showed that Jesus cares for people and understands when we face hard times.

BIBLE SKILLS: Babies and toddlers will . . .

- Say some Bible words and repeat short phrases.
- Listen to brief Bible stories.



CONNECT WITH FAMILIES

Provide these weekly resources to help families explore the Bible together.

- Explore the Bible at Home (Printable: Music & Print Extras)
- Diaper Bag Card
- Preschool Family Card



SESSION ACTIVITIES

BABIES EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Babies are sensory learners and they are relational. They learn best when teachers engage them through conversation and play. Prepare two or three activities for babies to enjoy as they explore the Bible.

First hour–

- Pull Tissues from a Box
- Find Pictures of Jesus
- Play with Shakers

Next hour–

- Repeat activities with babies in the next hour.

TODDLERS EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Toddlers are on the go and ready to learn. They learn best through playful exploration and discovery. Offer three or more multisensory activities to lead young preschoolers to discover and learn Bible truths.

First hour–

- Arrange Silk Flowers
- Craft Play Dough
- Discover Jesus Pictures
- Make Shakers

Next hour–

- Draw with Friends
- Jump & Say
- Read About Jesus

PLUS Circle Time!

TEXT TRUTH

Jesus is alive.

BIBLE STORY

The First Easter
Luke 23; 24:1-12

**BIBLE VERSE
PARAPHRASE**

Jesus is alive.
Luke 24:6a

PACK ITEMS

7 Story Picture: The First
Easter
16 Bible Verse Markers

PRINTABLES

Jesus Picture Circles
Shaker Labels

THE FIRST EASTER

Luke 23; 24:1-12

- *Friends were sad. Jesus was gone.*
- *A man said to the friends, "Jesus is alive."*
- *This was good news!*

EXPLORATIONS

PULL TISSUES FROM A BOX

Tools: Bible, box of facial tissues, Diaper Bag Card

- Set the box of facial tissues near a baby. Watch the baby pull tissues out of the box. (Be sure the baby does not put the tissues in his mouth!)
- Demonstrate how to use a tissue to wipe your nose or eyes. The baby may try to imitate your actions.
- Say: "When I am sad, I use a tissue to wipe my eyes. Jesus' friends were sad; Jesus was gone. But then, Jesus' friends became happy."
- Make a happy face to help the baby connect with the joy the women felt when they heard the news about Jesus.
- Open the Bible to Luke 24:6 and read the Bible verse. Make up a tune to sing these words: *Jesus is alive, Jesus is alive, I am so happy, Jesus is alive!*
- Show the baby the picture on the Diaper Bag Card.

FIND PICTURES OF JESUS

Tools: Bible, Bible Verse Markers, Jesus Picture Circles, 6 round plastic lids, wide clear tape, pop beads, plastic dishpan

- Tape a Jesus Picture Circle to each lid. Hide the lids and today's Verse Marker in the dishpan filled with pop beads.
- Sit on the floor next to a baby and begin putting a few pop beads together.
- Talk about the colors of the beads and the sound they make when you snap them together and pull them apart.

- Push the dishpan near the baby and wait for her to explore it. When she discovers a picture lid, talk about Jesus. Help the baby find the marker, then read the words to the baby. Put the marker in the Bible at Luke 24:6.
- Touch the Bible and say: “The Bible tells us that Jesus is alive!”

PLAY WITH SHAKERS

Tools: Bible, Story Picture: The First Easter, plastic bottle shakers (see Leader Tip), Music & Print Extras, Shaker Labels

- Make a few shakers ahead of time. Add the Shaker Labels that include today’s Text Truth: Jesus is alive!
- Put the Story Picture on the floor near a baby and roll a shaker bottle over the picture.
- When you have the baby’s attention, pick up the shaker and move it to create a sound. Put the shaker near the baby and wait for her to shake or roll it.
- Remark: “Hear the happy sounds at church. One day some friends heard a man say ‘Jesus is alive!’ This was good news, and the friends were happy!”
- Help the baby shake a bottle as music plays.

LEADER TIP!

Make shakers for babies to enjoy. Remove the label from empty plastic water bottles. Use clear packing tape to fasten a Shaker Label to each bottle. Pour 2-3 tablespoons of brightly colored aquarium gravel or small jingle bells into each bottle. Replace the caps on the bottles and seal with tape or glue.



NEXT HOUR (MORE EXPLORATIONS FOR BABIES)

- Continue and repeat activities from the first hour. Babies learn through repetition and practice.
- As you cuddle, rock, soothe, and tend to babies’ needs, talk about the Bible. Say Bible words and phrases.
- Use the Bible with babies. Let them see, touch, and turn Bible pages.

TEXT TRUTH

Jesus is alive.

BIBLE STORY

The First Easter
Luke 23; 24:1-12

**BIBLE VERSE
PARAPHRASE**

Jesus is alive.
Luke 24:6a

PACK ITEMS

7 Story Picture: The First
Easter
16 Bible Verse Markers
24 Book: *I Learn About Jesus*

PRINTABLES

Allergy Sign
Jesus Picture Circles
Play Dough Recipe
Shaker Labels

THE FIRST EASTER

Luke 23; 24:1-12

Two of Jesus' friends were very sad. Jesus was not with them anymore.

The women decided to visit the garden where Jesus' body had been placed in a tomb. The women carried special spices with them.

When the women reached the garden, they saw something strange. The big rock in front of the tomb had been rolled away from the door.

Then the women saw two men (angels) standing near them. The women were afraid.

The men said, "You are looking for Jesus, but He is not here. He is alive!"

Then the women remembered that Jesus had told them about these things. The women hurried to find Jesus' helpers and tell them the good news.

EXPLORATION STATIONS (45-60 MINUTES)

ARRANGE SILK FLOWERS



Tools: Bible, Diaper Bag Card, colorful silk flowers, 2 plastic wide mouth jars, pictures of flower gardens

- Lay an assortment of silk flowers, the jars, Bible, and card on a table.
- Show a toddler the pictures of flower gardens. Talk about flower gardens and how beautiful they are. Ask the child if she has seen a flower garden. She may tell about flowers that grow in her yard.
- Invite the child to place silk flowers in the jar to make an arrangement. A friend may want to arrange flowers, too.
- As children arrange flowers, show the picture on the Diaper Bag Card. Say: "The women went to the garden where Jesus' body had been taken. The women heard some amazing news!" Tell the Bible story.

CRAFT PLAY DOUGH

Tools: Bible, Story Picture: The First Easter, Bible Verse Markers, fresh play dough, Play Dough Recipe, Allergy Sign, cookie cutters, craft sticks

- Always provide fresh play dough for children. Teacher-made dough is easy and inexpensive to make. See recipe to make play dough ahead of time.
- Lay play dough and tools on a table and invite one or two children to join you.
- Encourage toddlers to roll, pound, pat, and cut the dough into whatever shapes they want. Remind children that the dough has to remain on the table.
- Hold the Story Picture and point to the large rock or stone in front of the tomb.
- Say: "Your mound of play dough looks a little like the stone in the picture. The stone had been rolled away when the women went to the garden."
- Open the Bible to Luke 24. Tell the story.

DISCOVER JESUS PICTURES

Tools: Bible, baking pan with 1-inch sides, clean play sand or cornmeal, Jesus Picture Circles, tape, Allergy Sign, Book: I Learn About Jesus

- Tape the Jesus Picture Circles in the bottom of the pan. Pour a thin layer of sand or cornmeal over the pictures.
- Direct a toddler to lightly brush aside sand to find a picture.
- Describe what Jesus is doing in the picture. Relate the picture to people loving Jesus and feeling sad when He was no longer with them.
- As other pictures are revealed, talk more about Jesus. Say: "Today is Easter. We are happy and celebrate that Jesus is alive."
- Open the Bible to Luke 24:6a and read the Bible verse to the toddler.
- Give another child a turn to brush sand. Picture-read the book about Jesus.

MAKE SHAKERS

Tools: Bible, Music & Print Extras, empty plastic water bottles (labels removed), clear packing tape, colorful aquarium gravel, spoon, small jingle bells, Shaker Labels

- Remove the product label from the water bottles. Make one shaker bottle ahead of time.
- Play music and gently shake your bottle in time to the music. Sing about Jesus.
- Invite a child to make a shaker. Guide him to tape a Shaker Label to his bottle. Help the child put 2-3 spoons of aquarium gravel and 1 jingle bell into the bottle. Replace the cap on the bottle and seal it with tape.
- Read the words printed on the label. Say: "Those words are in the Bible. Let's say them together while we shake our bottles." Play music in the background.

LEADER TIP!

Cornmeal can be substituted for the sand. Remember to post an allergy sign to tell parents about the sand or cornmeal.

CIRCLE TIME (2-5 MINUTES)

TEXT TRUTH

Jesus is alive.

BIBLE STORY

The First Easter
Luke 23; 24:1-12

BIBLE VERSE PARAPHRASE

Jesus is alive.
Luke 24:6a

CIRCLE TIME TOOLS

- Bible
- Music & Print Extras
- paper plates (1 per child)
- washable marker

PACK ITEMS

7 Story Picture: The First
Easter

Your toddlers may be ready for a simple circle time. You decide when and how long to have a group experience.

GATHER

- On each plate, draw a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other side.
- Play music and give each toddler a face plate to take to Circle Time.
- Invite children to sit on the floor.
- Say: "I will describe something that could make you feel happy or sad. Show the face that shows how you might feel."
- Suggest things such as: go to the park, stumble and get a scrape, eat pizza, find a lost toy, meet a new friend, hear a scary sound, and so on.
- After a few minutes, ask preschoolers to set their plates in the center of the circle.

PRACTICE BIBLE SKILLS

- Comment: "Easter is a special time to remember Jesus and how much He loved His friends. Jesus loves all people."
- Remind toddlers what the men (angels) told Jesus' friends: Jesus is alive!
- Invite toddlers to say the Bible verse together.

PRAY

- Thank God for Jesus. Pray: "Dear God, we are happy that Jesus is alive. Help us tell others this good news."

HEAR THE BIBLE STORY

- Say: "Today's story is about some women who were sad at first, then they were happy."
- Open the Bible to Luke 24 and tell the Bible story.
- Pass the Story Picture around the circle.
- Listen to the song "Hear the Good News" (track 6).

NEXT HOUR (MORE EXPLORATIONS FOR TODDLERS)

Continue activities from the first hour or offer these additional activities to help toddlers explore the Bible.

DRAW WITH FRIENDS

Tools: Bible, Music & Print Extras or praise music recording, large sheet of paper, tape, crayons

- Tape a large sheet of paper to a table. Lay crayons in the center of the paper. Write today's Text Truth on the paper.
- Play praise music and invite a child to draw on the paper. One or two friends may draw from other sides of the table.
- Point to the words written across the paper, then open the Bible to Luke 24:6.
- Say: "We read these words in the Bible. Luke wrote the story about the first Easter when the women discovered that Jesus was alive."

JUMP & SAY

Tools: Bible, 4 sheets of paper, marker

- Write one word of today's Bible verse on each paper. Write the Bible reference on a paper.
- Tape the papers to the floor several inches apart. Open the Bible to Luke 24:6.
- Lead a child to jump from paper to paper. As he jumps, say each word of the Bible verse. At the end, show the child the verse in the Bible.
- Remark: "Easter is a special day. Jesus is alive, and He loves us! Thank You, God, for Jesus."

READ ABOUT JESUS

Tools: Bible, Book: I Learn About Jesus (Pack Item 24), Story Picture: The First Easter (Pack Item 7), preschool picture books about Jesus, quilt, pillows

- Make a special reading area with the quilt and pillows. Tuck the Story Picture under a pillow.
- When a toddler shows interest in reading, invite him to choose a book. Talk with the child about the pictures and comment on things Jesus said and did to show His love for people.
- Say: "Something is under the pillow. Can you get it?" When the child uncovers the Story Picture, recall the Bible story. Say: "The women were sad at first, then when they heard the news that Jesus was alive, the women were happy!"
- Help a child find the story about Jesus in the Bible at Luke 24.

*Look for printable
Next Hour helps in
Music & Print Extras.*