**1. Motivate**

About what sort of news would you get excited right now?

* win the lottery
* your child receive a full ride scholarship
* your son/daughter deployed overseas in the military suddenly showed up at the door
* your child got an A on a test
* you got an offer (at your price) for the house you’ve been trying to sell
* your team won the championship

**2. Transition**

Jesus friends and disciples got some news that excited them!

* Jesus, who died on the cross, was *alive*!
* We can be excited because Jesus’ resurrection makes eternal life possible.

**3. Bible Study**

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://tinyurl.com/2d76emvw> . If you have no wi-fi where you teach, it is best to download the video file to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/3kfm5z4p>

3.1 The Tomb Was Empty!

Listen for a surprise.

John 20:1-2 (NIV) Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. [2] 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!"

Suppose you are a news writer … fill in the who, what, where, etc.

Who? Mary Magdalene, Peter, John

What? Stone removed from entrance of tomb, Mary runs to tell Peter and John

Where? Grave yard where Jesus had been buried

When? Early 1st day of week, still dark

Why? She thought someone had stolen Jesus’ body

How? She didn’t know how it happened, didn’t know exactly what happened

What does the fact that Mary went to a tomb where Jesus had been buried indicate?

* she assumed the body was still there
* she anticipated continuing with further burial tasks
* other writers mention their anticipation of needing to move the stone
* basically, she assumed Jesus was still dead

Mary found the tomb empty … what thoughts would have run through your mind if you unexpectedly discovered the empty tomb?

* Oh no, another thing gone wrong
* first they kill Him, now they steal, hide the body
* will the Pharisees and other religious leaders never give up
* how can this kind of thing happen
* who would be so nasty

Why do you think Mary assumed *someone* had taken the body?

* the idea of the resurrection did not enter her mind
* she might not have been privy to Jesus’ teachings about His return from death
* the controversy surrounding Jesus’ trial and execution suggested intrigue of some sort
* she expected the body to be there … in her mind the only way for it to be gone was a theft or removal by someone

What part to you think Mary’s emotions related to Jesus’ death play in her reaction to the empty tomb?

* all she could think of was her friend was gone
* the image of His suffering on the cross filled her mind
* there was no doubt He had died, painfully, horribly – she shared in that horror
* these feelings crowded out any knowledge she might have had about Jesus’ predicted resurrection

How do our emotions in a crisis prevent us from seeing the truth of a situation clearly?

* emotions are all that we can “hear” in our minds
* they “blind” us to reality
* emotions distract us from acting rationally
* in the extreme, they can cause depression and disable us from dealing with life

Mary was searching for Jesus’ remains in the tomb, but not finding them. Where do you see people searching for Jesus, searching for God but not finding Him?

* in church attendance, in doing good deeds to please God
* in mystical experiences (meditation, séances, etc.)
* sometimes in emotion-filled worship events
* in self help books
* in the cults, in eastern religions – “there are many ways to God”

3.2 He’s Alive!

Listen for mistaken identity.

John 20:11-16 (NIV) but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).

What different things did Mary see?

* the tomb
* two angels seated in the tomb
* someone she thought was the gardener
* the “gardener” turned out to be Jesus

More importantly was what she did *not*  see!

* The tomb was empty of Jesus’ body!

Why do you think she didn’t recognize the person she saw who turned out to be Jesus?

* was still a bit dark
* she was emotionally distraught – eyes full of tears
* still couldn’t believe (even imagine) that Jesus was alive
* if He was assumed to be dead, she would not expect to see (and recognize) Him

What became a point of revelation or realization for her?

* when Jesus spoke her name
* she must have recognized her voice

When might we have an encounter with God that we fail to recognize Him?

* when someone in need crosses our path and we help out (see Matt. 25:40)
* we are in a place of need, and someone (an angel?) comes along and helps us out of a jamb
* hearing a sermon or a comment in a Bible study and the concept really hits home – clobbers us between the eyes, so to speak

What are some reasons we might fail to see Jesus’ presence at work in our lives?

* we are not thinking on a spiritual level, only a rational level
* our minds are filled with temporal issues
* we see only the problems
* we are lacking God’s Truth, God’s perspectives
* we have a worldly mindset

What can we do to better recognize God’s presence at work in our lives and in the world around us?

* practice God’s presence
* make a conscious effort to see God’s workings in nature
* regularly read what God has to say in His Word
* talk to Him daily … share your joys and frustrations, your praise and thanksgiving
* talk to other people about what God has done for you, communicate your faith

3.3 Shout It Out!

Listen for a mission given.

John 20:17-18 (NIV) Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Why would Mary have wanted to cling to Jesus?

* afraid He’d get away
* emotionally overwhelmed (she needed a hug?)
* may have been more of an oriental custom of bowing down and clasping His feet in a submissive greeting

Why do we sometimes want to “cling” to Jesus?

* dependence on Him
* in faith
* in devotion

A baby or young child sometimes goes through a “clingy” stage. How might that be true about our relationship with the Lord?

* we want to stay close to His “embrace”
* afraid of the opposition of the world out there
* don’t want to extend ourselves, take any chances

Jesus told Mary to go tell the disciples of His resurrection. This was also part of the “don’t cling to me” command. What has God called us to do?

* take the Good News to the whole world
* tell others about their need and God’s provision for salvation
* take part in the world wide expansion of the Kingdom of God, the Church
* give to make missions possible
* pray for those who are taking the Gospel around the world

Why is the resurrection the central message of all Christianity?

* if Jesus just died and stayed in the grave, He would only be a martyr
* not only did Jesus’ substitutionary death provide forgiveness of sins
* His resurrection from the grave gives us *new life* – a life free from the penalty and power of sin
* the empty grave proves the reality and Truth of Jesus’ claims and our message

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Connect.

* Spend some time with a couple of others from the group reflecting upon all the barriers that Jesus took down so that you could hear the gospel message.
* Consider what barriers still exist today for people and how you can be a part of taking those misconceptions down.

Go.

* Reread Mary’s message to the disciples. (See John 20:17-18.)
* Take a moment to write down or memorize how to share the gospel.
* Begin praying about someone you can share this message with this week.

Worship.

* Take a moment to read the prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament and how the signs point to Jesus fulfilling them completely.
* A good study Bible is a great place to start.
* Spend time in personal worship for who Jesus is.

Cryptogram Puzzle

Our consulate in Elof Monorger received these two parts of a coded message. Above is the code, below is the one time pad used to encode it. Our decoding team is on Easter break with their parents. Ironically, they are **in** Elof Monorger. We need your help to use the numbers in the message to find the letters in the encoding pad. Some are missing, so you’ll have to figure those out when you get everything else recorded. Technical help and further Fun Family Activities are found at <https://tinyurl.com/3kfm5z4p>