

# BACK FROM THE DEAD

MATTHEW  
27:57—28:20

**Big Idea** *Overwhelming evidence confirms that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive today!*

## Lesson Summary

Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the victory festival for all who believe in Him. The truth of Jesus' resurrection is the most indispensable of all our beliefs. If Jesus did not die, we are still in our sins. If He died but did not rise from the dead, we are still in our sins. But if Jesus died and rose from the dead, we embrace the greatest news ever to enter the minds and mouths of humankind. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the focal point of all history. With it, all people have reason for hope. Without it, all people are left to despair.

Did Jesus Christ die and rise again on the third day? The testimonies of many witnesses can be carefully examined so that each person may decide. After examining the Gospel accounts of this great event, we discover that it takes far more faith to believe that Jesus did not die and did not rise from the dead than it does to confidently believe that He did indeed die and that God raised Him back to life.

This lesson provides an opportunity to present evidence to your students that will strengthen their faith in the facts of the Gospel, and equip them to stand against skeptics who seek to reject God's most wonderful provision: eternal salvation from sin and punishment through the death and resurrection of His incredible Son, Jesus Christ.

## Teacher Devotional

*Lord, give me a clear mind to grasp the evidence of the resurrection miracle and give me an articulate voice to communicate its truth and wonder to all my students.*

*Work in the hearts and minds of my students so that they will be receptive to the most incredible message of Jesus' death and resurrection. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.*

## Make Disciples

**Teacher—Decide where to place these elements into this lesson.**

### Opening Prayer

Remind students of the power of God to raise from the dead. Ask God to increase your students' confidence in God's power. Pray that God will use His resurrection power to bring joy into the hearts of each of your students and to increase their love for Him. Thank God for sending Jesus, His resurrected Son, to live in each of His children.



## DISCIPLE TARGETS In this lesson, your children will...

### KNOWLEDGE (truths)

- K** • Jesus truly died and rose from the dead.
- N** • Historical evidence overwhelmingly concludes that Jesus lived again after He was crucified, dead, and buried.
- O** • Jesus' followers believed in His resurrection and were willing to die for their testimony.

### CHARACTER (emotions)

- F** • Confident that Jesus truly did die and rise again to life.
- E** • Grateful that Jesus died to forgive their sins.
- E** • Amazed at the incredible miracle of the resurrection.

**L**

### CONDUCT (actions)

- D** • Confess to others their faith in Jesus' death and resurrection.
- O** • Share evidence of Jesus' death and resurrection with their friends.
- Memorize Matthew 28:6.

## KeyVerse

**Topic:** Back from the Dead

**Reference:** *Matthew 28:6*

**Memorization Activity:** Give students markers or crayons and a piece of 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Encourage them to diagram the verse to communicate the meaning of the words and enhance memory. For instance, nouns can be blue, verbs red, pronouns purple, etc. In addition, certain words can visually depict their meanings. For instance, each letter in the word "risen" can be slightly higher than the previous letter. Show them a model diagram.

but they are trusting an eyewitness (the student) about what is in the pocket. Instruct the child to show the others the rock.

Finally, select two students whom you trust to act responsibly. One at a time, allow each to peek independently into the box and write down on a piece of paper what he or she saw, without showing the other. Collect the pieces of paper and have them sit down. Side by side, hold up each piece of paper to show that the two saw the same thing. One might write "baseball" while another writes "round ball" or "rubber ball." Though their descriptions may vary, it is still clear that they saw the same thing. **Do you believe them when they say they saw a ball?** The majority or all of the students will likely affirm, "Yes." **Why do you believe?** Emphasize the value of two different witnesses agreeing with each other.

**In today's lesson we will be learn about eyewitness accounts of the most important event ever—the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

## Spark Interest

**Teacher—Choose one activity that will involve students and grab their attention.**

### **Eyewitness Accounts** (10-15 minutes)

*This demonstration activity highlights the importance of eyewitness testimony.* **Supplies:** pencil, small rock, box, ball

Before class, place the ball in a box with a lid on it. Also, ask a child who is perceived as trustworthy to hold the small rock in his or her pocket, instructing him or her to keep it a secret until you ask to reveal it. (Tell the student that when asked what is in his or her pocket to *say* what it is without showing it to the others.)

Hold up your pencil and ask your students, **I have a pencil in my hand. Do you believe me?**

They will, of course, say, "Yes." Then ask them, **Are you sure it is not a stick? Are you sure it is not a bone? How can you be so sure?** They will explain that they know what a pencil is and that they saw the pencil with their own eyes. Tell them that they are sure because they are EYEWITNESSES.

Next, ask the child with the rock in his or her pocket to come forward. **A little while ago I asked you to put something in your pocket. What was it?**

When he or she says, "A rock," ask again, **Are you telling the truth?** Then ask the others if they believe the student. The normal response will be something like, "Yes, I believe it." But, there will also be some doubt. Ask them why they believe it.

Explain that the class members are not eyewitnesses,

OR

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MATTHEW  
27:57—28:20

# BACK FROM THE DEAD



List ways that help you determine whether someone is dead or alive.

Dead People

Living People

**Back to Life** (10-15 minutes)

This discussion activity contrasts Jesus' resurrection with others'.

Make a list of people in the Bible who came back to life after they died. Some people who came back to life:

*A widow's son—1 Kings 17:17-24*

*A dead man—2 Kings 13:21*

*A widow's son—Luke 7:11-16*

*Jairus' daughter—Luke 8:41-56*

*Lazarus—John 11:1-46*

*Dorcas—Acts 9:40*

Talk about why Jesus' death and resurrection is different from the others'.

**Disciple Guide—pages 1-2**

Help children list differences between the living and the dead. Encourage them to find biblical responses to people who claim Jesus never came back to life. Complete the HeartBeat.

**Explore Scripture**

**Teacher—Teach the Bible lesson. Include exercises from the student Disciple Guides.**

**Matthew 27:57–28:20**

If you can, bring in medical instruments like a stethoscope, blood pressure cuff, and thermometer. Invite a volunteer to lie down on a table or floor as a “guinea pig.” Use the instruments to determine that he or she is indeed “alive.”

Invite your students to read the account of the resurrection in Matthew 27:57–28:20 (and the other Gospels) in search of solid evidence to answer the questions in the student pages. For a time, encourage them to work toward answers by exercising critical thinking skills. Toward the end of the available time, come together as a large group, allowing various students to share their own responses to the questions. If they miss certain points, share the following facts to equip them with a clear understanding of the facts of the resurrection as recorded by multiple eyewitnesses.

When a person dies, the blood separates so that there is water (or clear plasma). This does not happen with people who are still alive. Therefore, Jesus could not have merely been sleeping or in a coma. Also, it could not have been someone else because Jesus' own mother was at the cross, saw Him, and heard Him speak (John 19:25-27).

Explain the importance of the fact that it was not just a single witness who claimed Jesus was raised from the dead. More than 500 witnesses saw Him (1 Corinthians 15:1-5)!

Also, the witnesses were not simply a group of eager followers who sought to make Jesus' death mean something. This group included skeptics who at first resisted believing in the resurrection, but who ultimately were allowed to see and touch Him after He was raised (John 20:24-29).

Explain that these were not people who just *wanted* to believe that He was alive. They were so convinced of Jesus' resurrection that history records that at least ten of the eleven disciples actually died because of their refusal to deny this fact. (See Fox's *Book of Martyrs* for this account—only the Apostle John is thought to have died a natural death. All the others died affirming the resurrection of Jesus.) It is not natural for people to submit to pain and death for something they believe is a lie. The eyewitnesses saw that Jesus rose from the dead.

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**Clear VERDICT!**

What would you say if someone told you...

1. Jesus was unconscious, woke up, and quietly left the tomb (27:62-66).
2. Jesus' followers secretly removed the stone and took His body (28:1-4).
3. Jesus was still dead, but His followers told others He was alive (28:9).
4. Jesus died and was buried in a different tomb; no one really saw Him alive (28:9-10, 28:16-17, 1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

Who would you like to share the evidence of Jesus' resurrection with?

**KEY VERSE**

Back from the Dead  
Matthew 28:6

Close by reading 1 John 1:1. Inform your kids that John, Thomas, and the other disciples were trustworthy eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. **We believe because God has given us their witness and the record of it in the Bible. When we look at the evidence of the resurrection, we see that it takes more faith *not* to believe it than to believe it!**

## Additional Activities

### Calvary in 3-D (15-20 minutes)

**Supplies:** clay, sticks, stones

Provide a large glob of clay, small sticks, stones, and other materials. Encourage your students to artistically re-create the scenes of the crucifixion and resurrection in three dimensions.

### The Great Trial of the Ages (20-40 minutes)

Set the scene for a trial in which students examine the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus. Assign individuals roles such as judge, defense (a student should play the role of Jesus answering the charge of counterfeiting the resurrection), prosecution (accusing the defense of a counterfeit resurrection), witnesses, jurors, bailiff, etc.

### Field Trip (30 minutes)

Visit a local cemetery or a mortuary. Talk about the miracle that must take place for a body to come to life again after all the organs stopped working. Discuss Jesus' promise in John 11:25.

## Inspire Action

**Teacher—Choose one activity that will encourage learners to apply the Bible truth to their lives.**

### Good News Role Play (10 minutes)

*This role play activity lets kids practice sharing the Good News.*

Ask your students to each identify three other people they would like to share the news of the resurrection with. In a role-play, practice in pairs explaining why they believe the death and resurrection of Jesus are true.

OR

### "I Believe" Essay (15 minutes)

*This writing activity encourages to personalize their belief in Jesus' resurrection.* **Supplies:** pens or pencils, paper

Allow students to express in writing their own convictions about the resurrection of Jesus. Have them answer questions such as: **Do you believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus? What evidence do you have to support your position? Why do you think the resurrection of Jesus is or is not important?** Give them a model introduction and conclusion to get them started. Allow those who would like to do so to post their essays for others to read and be encouraged.

### Closing Prayer

Pray that each student will grasp the evidence supporting the resurrection of Jesus and that their whole view of life will be changed forever because of this most incredible fact in history. Ask God to give the students boldness to share their convictions with others in need of the Gospel.

### DISCIPLESHIP TIP

Believe in the cognitive and reasoning abilities of your students. Allow them opportunities to demonstrate their intellect, and watch them rise to the occasion.

### SUPPLIES ✓

#### General Supplies

Bibles, Disciple Guides  
Pencils, markers, crayons  
Paper, scissors, tape, glue

#### Make Disciples

No additional supplies

#### Spark Interest

•EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS: pencil, small rock, box, ball  
•BACK TO LIFE: no additional supplies

#### Explore Scripture

None

#### Inspire Action

•GOOD NEWS ROLE PLAY: none  
•"I BELIEVE" ESSAY: no additional supplies



I'M GOING \_\_\_\_\_

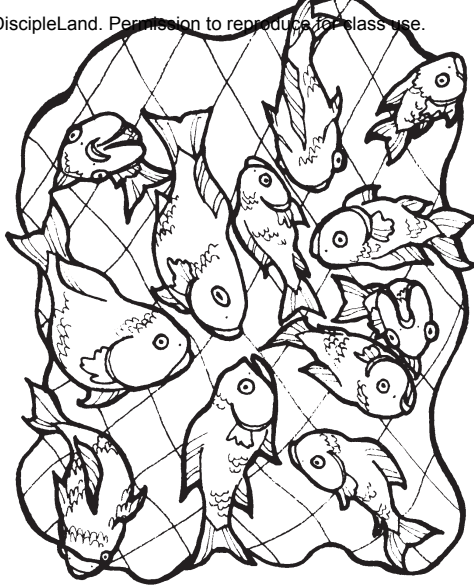
WE'LL GO TOO.



DID YOU CATCH ANYTHING?



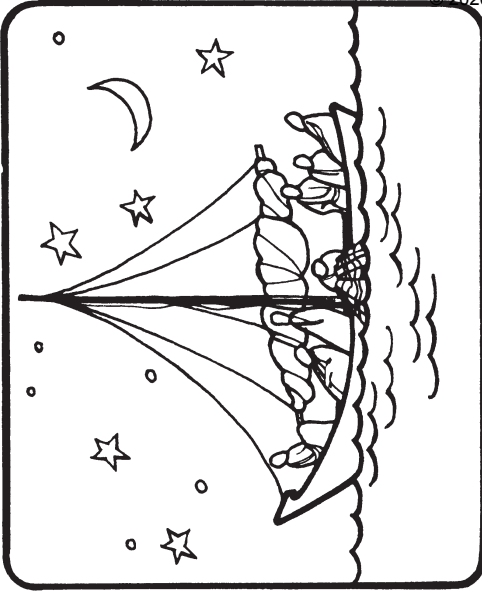
CAST YOUR \_\_\_\_\_ ON THE RIGHT . . . YOU'LL CATCH SOME.

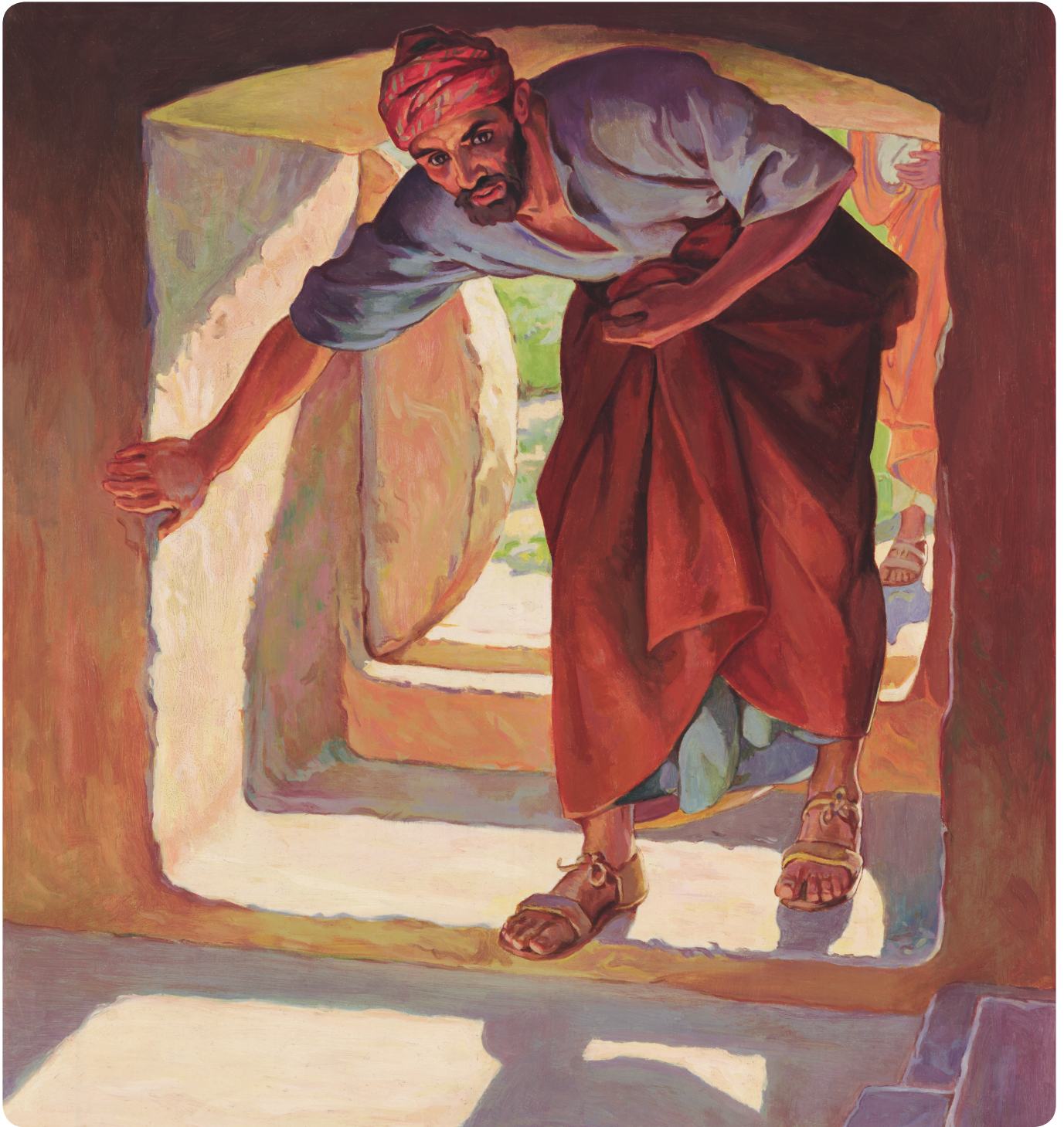


IT'S THE \_\_\_\_\_!



BRING SOME OF THE FISH, AND \_\_\_\_\_





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**SHEL—Back from the Dead**

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