

RESURRECTION

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Small container, paper, pens
- Copies of the downloadable “Litany” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: ON THE SPOT, THE SURPRISE VERSION

Write out some of the questions listed below on scraps of paper (you may wish to add your own), fold them, and place them in an opaque container. Have the teens sit in a circle. One at a time, ask each teen to select a question from the container and speak on the topic/question selected.

YOU MAY WANT TO ALLOW FOR ONE “PASS” PER TURN IF A TEEN SELECTS A QUESTION THAT THEY ARE UNCOMFORTABLE SPEAKING ABOUT. FOR SMALL GROUPS, YOU MAY WANT TO TAKE MULTIPLE TURNS. FOR LARGE (OR TALKATIVE) GROUPS, YOU MAY HAVE TO TIME RESPONSES (FOR EXAMPLE, EACH PERSON HAS THIRTY SECONDS TO ANSWER).

- Describe the most unlikely weather forecast for tomorrow.
- Tell us something about yourself that people who know you might find surprising.
- What would be the most unexpected thing to happen in one of your classes?
- What is the best surprise you ever experienced?
- What change to your appearance would shock people most?
- What would be the best news you could ever receive?
- What is the most unexpected experience you’ve had in the last year?
- Do you like surprises? Why or why not?
- Have you ever become friends with someone who turned out to be totally different from what you thought they were like before you knew them?
- Describe a food combination that you thought would be terrible but turned out to be amazing.

THE LITANY: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the Litany, leaving off the Grace (which can be said at the close of the lesson).

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: “WE HAD HOPED”

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- Have you ever hoped for something that seemed impossible? What happened?
- What can make you give up hope?
- How do you think you’d react if something you’d hoped for, but given up on, happened?

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A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):

- We've all known hopes that seem far-fetched. It may be that special person you wish would fall for you, the parent you wish would understand, or the academic goal you'd like to achieve. This is a great opportunity to share a story of your own.
- Sometimes it seems like too much time has passed for us to keep holding onto a hope that has not been realized yet. And sometimes circumstances change in such a way that it makes our hope seem less likely than ever. Yet we are reminded in scripture that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).
- As we'll see in today's text, joy, excitement and even amazed disbelief can be our reactions when the thing we'd hoped for hard, but given up on, is raised from the dead!

THE LESSON: LUKE 24

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

By thy glorious Resurrection... Good Lord, deliver us.

Jesus had humbled himself: by taking on human flesh, by leading a life of obedience, and by sacrificing himself in death on the cross to pay the price for our sin. *But Jesus did not stay dead.* God the Father exalted Jesus, raising him from the dead. Instead of being defeated by death, *Jesus defeated death itself!* Appearing to St. John, he said, "I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades" (Revelation 1:17-18).

To the disciples, this was the ultimate surprise. All their hopes had been dashed with the death of Jesus and they were lost and frightened. They didn't understand what was going on. Even though Jesus had prophesied about what would happen, his disciples were still not expecting it. It took the wonderful surprise of the resurrection to transform them from a frightened group of confused followers to a bold team of confident and committed preachers.

But the resurrection isn't just a far-removed historic event that made a difference to the disciples two thousand years ago. It is something that makes a difference for all believers, no matter where you are or what year it is. St. Paul sums this up in the word "first fruits". It's a term he uses to describe the resurrection of Jesus; a word that means that there is *more to come!* Listen to St. Paul's explanation:

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ... Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed... then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory'... thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"(1 Corinthians 15:22-57).

Refer to Luke 24:13-35.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: LUKE 24:13-53.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- Look at verses 13-24. What were these disciples feeling? Who was Jesus to them?
- After listening to their account of things, how did Jesus respond?
- What effect did their encounter with Jesus have on these disciples?

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A few notes and reflections for reference:

- The text tells us that they were sad (v17). They were totally preoccupied with the recent crucifixion of Jesus – and reports of his resurrection – and could not imagine anyone being unaware of what had taken place (v18). They recognized that Jesus was a prophet and they had hoped that he was going to “redeem Israel” but things had not happened the way they expected them to. They had given up on their hope. The reports of the women disciples saying that Jesus had been raised “amazed” them (v22), but they were skeptical, not understanding how this could be God’s plan.
- Jesus first asked the question that allowed these disciples to explain all that was in their hearts and minds (v17). After this, Jesus’ next words are a rebuke that point to the fact that all the information was there, prophesied, but disregarded (v25-26). Many believing Jews at that time had disregarded the prophecies about the suffering of the Messiah, while fixing their hopes on the passages about his victory. As a result, they were anticipating a political conquest instead of a spiritual one. But though his response began with a rebuke, Jesus continued with a careful explanation of where they had gone wrong in their understanding of the scriptures (v27), and he stopped to share a meal with them (v30).
- Hearing Jesus “open the scriptures” and explain matters to them made them feel that their hearts were burning within them (v32). Though they had decided to conclude their travelling for the day, everything was changed for them when they recognized Jesus. The text tells us they “rose that same hour” – they hurried to share the good news of what had happened (v33-35).

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer).)

Scripture is filled with prayers and praises in the form of poetry and songs. During this unit, try your hand at song-writing; drawing inspiration from the love God has for you, made evident in the work of Jesus Christ.

Spend some time this week writing your own song of praise inspired by the resurrection of Christ.

(Stuck? Spend some time instead reflecting on the words of this hymn penned by Robert Lowry (1826-1899): “Up from the grave he arose; with a mighty triumph o’er his foes; he arose a victor from the dark domain, and he lives forever, with his saints to reign. He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!”)

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

Almighty God, who through thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life: We humbly beseech thee, that as by thy special grace thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

(THE COLLECT FOR EASTER DAY, BCP PAGE 182)

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CLOSING PRAYERS

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", printed at the end of the Litany booklet.

LUKE 24: THE BEST POSSIBLE SURPRISE

¹³That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²²Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." ²⁵And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" ³³And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.