**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 1 of 4

# Easter Sunday

### MEETING AIM

To give children the opportunity to see this well-known story afresh and discover how it applies to their lives today.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

John 20:1-18

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

If you have been around church for any amount of time, this story will be very familiar. However, we do well not to get too used to the incredible truth of the story and what a life-changing difference it makes to us today. Take the opportunity in this session to allow the truth to become fresh again and communicate this ‘alive truth’ to the children.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments. Chat about what the children have done this week and ask what they know about Easter. If you have already looked at some of the other events of Easter week, chat through what they remember. Ask the children about their favourite Easter eggs – you could do a survey to find the most popular one!

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** coins; a prepared coin magic trick

Beforehand, search for a ‘disappearing coin’ trick on YouTube. ([This video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzxFZQSA-Kc) has a few options.) Provide a coin and instructions for each child and teach them this simple ‘magic trick’. Give them time to practise and then perform to the rest of the group, or in pairs if preferred. Encourage them to add in some showbusiness to make the trick as entertaining as possible!

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** two adults dressed as Peter and Mary Magdalene; white material for ‘burial linens’; a photograph of a stone rolled away from a tomb; ‘selfie’ of Mary Magdalene with the ‘gardener’; pens and paper

Before the session, brief the volunteers who will be Peter and Mary Magdalene about what they will need to do. Encourage them to read the Bible story thoroughly, so that they are ready to answer questions that the children will ask them about the story. Take a selfie of Mary Magdalene and another leader pretending to be Jesus.

Divide the children into ‘detective teams’ or do this all together. Provide the children with their brief, access to the witnesses and evidence. They must come up with questions to interview the witnesses, inspect the evidence and come to a conclusion about what has happened to the body. When they have made their conclusions, they can present their findings to the rest of the group.

Brief:

*A body has gone missing from the tombs in Jerusalem. Using the evidence and witnesses provided, your detective team must work out what has happened to the body.*

*Witnesses:*

*• Mary Magdalene*

*• Peter the fisherman*

*Produce a set of your own questions and interview the witnesses.*

*Evidence:*

*• Set of worn burial linens*

*• Photograph of the stone rolled away*

*• Photograph of Mary Magdalene with the gardener*

*When you have solved the mystery, write some notes and present your findings to your fellow detectives.*

Give the children time to look at the evidence and question the two witnesses. Once they have examined everything, give the children Bibles and direct them to John 20. After a few minutes of chat and making notes, invite the detective teams to present their ideas to the rest of the group. Make sure the groups have enough help and support from leaders, but let the children lead their own investigation – don’t be tempted to take over!

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* How do you think Mary felt when she realised the body was missing?
* What would you have done?
* Why do you think Jesus waited for Mary to recognise him instead of telling her who he was?
* What does this story tell us about God?
* What difference does it make for us today?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** bowls; wooden spoons; ingredients (one cup of salt, two cups of flour, three-quarters cup of water per pair); clean-up and cover-up equipment

Divide the children into pairs with the equipment and ingredients. Show the group how to mix together the salt and the flour, and add the water gradually until the mixture forms a dough. Help any pairs who might need a bit of assistance to do this.

Halve the dough between the pair and invite each child to make their own version of the story or one aspect of it that stood out for them. Ask them to explain their choice either in pairs or to the whole group. They can take these models home and bake them in the oven or leave them to air-dry.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** pens and paper

Invite the children to write a prayer on a small piece of paper. This can be a thanksgiving, praise or even a repentance prayer. Using the principles from the coin disappearing trick from earlier in the session, encourage them to, one at a time, say their prayer aloud while ‘disappearing’ the paper.

At the end of the session, some of the children might want to chat about the story and what Jesus means to them. Make sure that you allow time and space for this to happen. Have some resources to help, if you like (you could try [these](https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/jesus-died-me)).

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