**1. Motivate**

How has someone recently surprised you with what he or she did or said?

* a birthday party

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_96whp7zb> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/y4huh38t>

* went out to eat
* a special present
* remembered our anniversary
* kids came up with a really good idea
* got an award at work
* received a prize for the best \_\_\_\_\_
* neighbors moved without telling anyone (could be a good or bad surprise)
* someone at work just up and quit

**2. Transition**

Jesus’ followers were surprised to discover an empty tomb.

* Jesus’ resurrection is more than just an exciting surprise.
* Jesus’ resurrection offers eternal life for you and me.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 The Tomb Was Empty

Listen for Mary’s 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!"

Even though the tomb was empty, what conclusions did she reach that caused her message to be misguided?

* told Peter and John someone “they” had removed Jesus’ body
* she was wondering where the body had been taken
* she did NOT have any idea that Jesus had been raised from the dead
* no thought of a resurrection

If you had been either Mary, Peter, or John, what thoughts would have run through your mind when you discovered the empty tomb?

* confused
* trying to think why would anyone take Jesus’ body
* thinking that if the unjust death was bad enough, now there is further insult of body snatchers
* *maybe* start to remember what Jesus said about coming back to life … “could it be?”

How do people often respond to life’s unexpected events?

* run in circles scream and shout
* cry
* get the news out on social media
* video with your phone
* find a lawyer, sue the rascal who did this
* call your congressman … the government needs to do something about this
* find another doctor for a second opinion
* some folks will get drunk or abuse some other substance (chocolate?) to drown their sorrows

Why do we sometimes fail to fully understand how God is working in a situation?

* we see it from the perspective of the problem
* we only look at what is wrong, how it needs to be fixed
* we don’t consider any other reason God is at work in a different way
* we have our own fixed view or opinion
* it comes down to a lack of faith … not trusting God to accomplish things in His timing, in His way, for His purposes

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”

Consider elements of our faith that we *believe* but *don’t fully* understand …

* The Trinity
* The indwelling of the Holy Spirit
* *Why* God would love us enough to die for us
* The *how* of creation and the universe
* The *when* of the Second Coming of Christ

⇨ It is entirely possible to place your faith and trust in Jesus by believing in His death and resurrection *without* fully understanding the theology regarding salvation.

3.2 Jesus Showed Himself as Alive

Listen for Mary’s discovery.

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 was her concern and erroneous conclusion expressed both to the angels in the tomb and the person she supposed to be the gardener?

* someone had taken Jesus’ body
* she didn’t know where it could be
* thought maybe it was the gardener who had done something

Mary didn’t recognize Jesus at first. 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

When have you had an encounter with God that you didn’t recognize at first?

* sometimes you come very close to a tragic event and it seems (and probably is) a miracle that you survived
* could have been an angel who intervened
* faced with a problem and someone (an angel?) came along and helped
* you read a Bible verse that seems to jump out and slap you in the face and speak specifically to the issue you are concerned about

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

We see Mary going from crying, to clinging, to telling about Jesus’ resurrection. What changed her (and should change our) direction?

* realization that Jesus is alive
* obeying Jesus’ command to go and tell others
* realization that even we can have a personal relationship with a *risen* Jesus

3.3 Tell Others

Listen for Jesus’ command to Mary

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.

What act of Mary is implied by Jesus’s words in verse 17?

* she hugged Him
* she may have bowed down and grasped His feet
* may have nearly fainted and caught by Jesus

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
* In India, people touch the feet of their elder brothers, parents, grandparents, teachers, spiritual gurus and other senior citizens.

What prohibition did Jesus give and what was His reason?

* don’t hang on
* Jesus will soon not be physically present
* instead it will be the Holy Spirit who dwells within the life of every believer
* Jesus was on earth as a human, stuck in time and place
* the Holy Spirit is omnipresent, indwelling all believers everywhere

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 worldwide 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 does telling others of our experiences with the risen Lord help to change our grief to joy?

* verbalizing this kind of Truth helps us understand it better ourselves
* helps us focus on Jesus
* gets our minds off our own self
* when we communicate the Good News, it has an effect on our lives as well

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

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Trust Christ.

* Knowing the truth of the resurrection of Christ is not enough.
* Commit to Him, trusting Him by faith.
* Turn to the inside front cover of your Bible Study book where you can read the greatest message of hope that has ever been shared.
* Talk to someone about your desire to follow the resurrected Christ.

Write your testimony.

* Write out how you came to know Christ as your Savior.
* Include how you became convinced and convicted of your spiritual need and how it could only be satisfied by Jesus.
* Feel free to update your testimony as more thoughts and details come to mind. Keep your written testimony in your Bible.
* It will be a treasure and a witness to your family in the years to come.

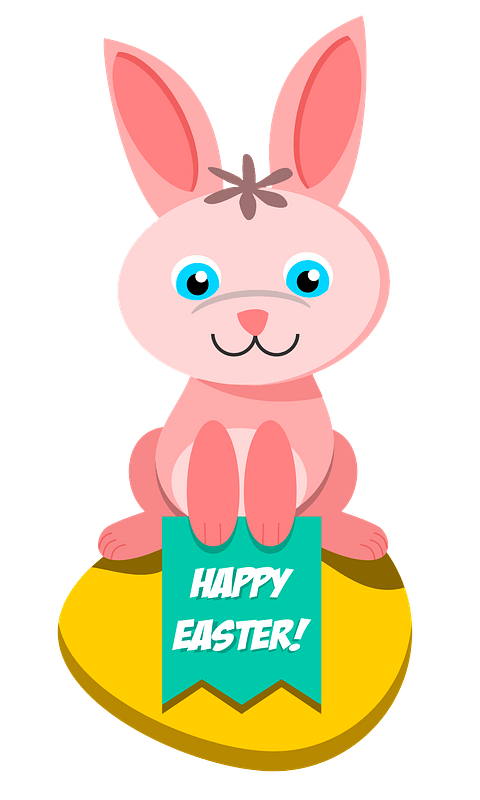
Pray and share.

* Write down the names of three people you know who need to hear the gospel.
* Pray daily for these three people and ask God for the opportunity to share the gospel with them soon

ANGELS  
BENT  
BODY  
BROTHERS  
CARRIED  
CRYING  
DARK  
DISCIPLE  
EARLY  
ENTRANCE  
FATHER  
FOOT  
GARDENER  
HEAD  
HOLD  
JESUS  
MAGDALENE  
MARY

NEWS  
OVER  
PETER  
RABBONI  
REALIZE  
REMOVED  
RETURNED  
RETURNING  
RUNNING  
SEEN  
STONE  
TAKEN  
TEACHER  
THINKING  
TOMB  
TURNED  
WEPT  
WHITE

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Easter bunnies … Humph! Just another commercialization of a Spiritual Truth. You can experience more joy in the Truth of this Bible study. You can find these words in the Scripture passage, but can you find them in the grid? They go left, right, up, down, and diagonal. Make Easter Happy Again (wear a MEHA hat). Help and other Family Activities available at <https://tinyurl.com/y4huh38t>