

date: 7/16/17

Bible Passage: Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20—21
(Death and Resurrection)

Jesus Is Alive

REMEMBER VERSE

I want to know Christ—yes, to know
the power of his resurrection.

Philippians 3:10a

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

On my first day of seminary, the dean counseled us that seminary can sometimes be one of the lowest times in a pastor's life. I was very surprised by this. I'd been looking forward to seminary, expecting it to be a time when I would grow closer to God. He cautioned us that we might mistake studying God's Word in an academic way for actually spending time with God. Even after this warning, I fell into this trap, and my intimacy with God suffered.

One day, I was given the assignment to attend an all-day seminar called "Walk through the Bible." I wasn't very excited about this additional burden on my schedule. I thought I already knew the Bible pretty well.

As the sessions began, they started teaching us hand motions for major events in The Big God Story. We parted the Red Sea with our arms and crowned David as king. We flexed our muscles and yelled out, "Samson!" It was incredibly engaging. I stood, sat, and waved my arms while I called out memorable phrases like, "Let my people go!" The whole audience participated enthusiastically—and learned The Big God Story as a faith community. The seminar was memorable and actually very fun.

I was struck after leaving with how excited I now was to tell God's story. Knowing The Big God Story in a deeper way transformed me and the way I teach the Bible. Amidst that challenging and lonely time during seminary, God gave me a fresh perspective on His Word and His story.

Jeff Carter

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Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

God has been working out His plan of redemption since the very beginning of The Big God Story. And God chose to use covenants as the mechanism through which He would redeem the world back to Himself.

Throughout The Big God Story, God entered into covenants with mankind in order to establish relationships with people and to reveal His plans for dealing with humanity's sin by sending a Redeemer. The four main (redemptive) covenants are the Abrahamic (Genesis 12; 13; 15; 17; 18; 22), Mosaic (Leviticus 26), Davidic (2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17), and New Covenants (Luke 22:18–20; Revelation 21:1–7).

In the Abrahamic Covenant, God promised blessing to the world (the promise of a Redeemer) and chose Israel to be the channel of that blessing. God then gave the terms by which His people, Israel, would be able to experience that blessing: through obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. Later, God clarified this initial promise made to Abraham by giving the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant gave people a better, fuller understanding of what the coming king (Messiah) would be like.

Through the prophets, God promised a New Covenant that would once and for all take care of the problem of sin. Through the New Covenant, God would enable His people to obey His Law through the inner promptings of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, this marked the climax of The Big God Story. The cross is the embodiment of the blessing God promised to Israel—to bless them and to bless the world through them. Jesus is the promise. He is the promise God gave to Adam and Eve in the garden (Genesis 3:15). He is the promise God gave to Abraham and the prophets through the covenants. When we proclaim, “Jesus is alive,” we are seeing the fulfillment of thousands of years of promise.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

This week, meditate on these verses that express the fact that Jesus is our Redeemer, our hope, our Savior. Be blessed by the simplicity of God's Word. He is alive!

Job 19:25: “I know that my redeemer lives ...”

Isaiah 47:4: “Our Redeemer ... is the Holy One of Israel.”

Isaiah 53:3–6: “He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Matthew 1:21: “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

John 1:29: ... John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Revelation 22:20: He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

EXPLORE:: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

The Big God Story Drawing

Although kids will hear a condensed version of The Big God Story today, the focus is on Jesus being alive. In this activity, children can draw scenes from the part of The Big God Story where Jesus died and rose again.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [The Big God Story picture cards \(see Resources\)](#)
- Scissors
- Resealable bags (1 per child, quart-size)
- Washable tempera paint
- Packing tape (clear)

PREPARE AHEAD

Print one set of The Big God Story picture cards for every four children and cut them out. Put a dollop of paint into each storage bag. Squeeze the air out and seal, and then use clear packing tape to create an extra seal along the top. Smooth out the bags and make them flat to evenly distribute the paint.

SET UP

Place a bag of paint at each child's seat. Place picture cards at various points along the table, making sure each child can reach a set of cards for reference.

RELATE

Welcome kids and allow them to find a seat around the table. **Today is a special day, because we get to celebrate that Jesus is alive! The cards on the table show some pictures that help tell us about the special day we're celebrating. You can use your finger to draw on your bag what you see on the cards. Would you like to try it with me? Draw a picture and show it to me or a neighbor and we'll guess what you're drawing. Or you can write a special letter or word from today. Here are some to try: Jesus, cross, tomb, angel, morning, heaven.**

Large Group
SECTION

DISCOVER:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse

memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point

Jesus Is Alive

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "God, You're Big," TruWorship *Your Love* and "The Big God Story," TruWorship *Songs from the Playhouse*)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. *Tech: Cue preschool program theme song.* Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Remember Verse image \(see Resources\)](#)
- Envelope (large)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with children.

Lead children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

**I want to know Christ—yes, to know
the power of his resurrection.**

Philippians 3:10a

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

Power: strength or ability

His resurrection: when Jesus rose from the dead

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

I want: Both hands open, palms and fingers up, begin away from body and pull in.

to know: Index finger points to temples.

Christ: Index finger points up.

yes: Make fist with right hand and rock forward and back like knocking on door.

to know: Index finger points to temples.

the power: Make strong arms.

of his resurrection: Hold left palm facing up; with right hand's index and middle finger, touch middle of left palm.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- **What'sIt:** [Empty Wardrobe](#) (see optional image in Resources)
- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

What'sIt: Empty Wardrobe

Jesus' followers took His body, wrapped it in linens, and placed it in a tomb. They waited until the end of the Sabbath to return and prepare His body for burial. When they arrived at the tomb, all they found were the linens that were used to wrap His body. The tomb was empty. He had risen, just as He said!

RELATE

Invite a child volunteer to “spy” on the What'sIt by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, *cue the Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect*. Have him whisper the identity of the What'sIt in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What'sIt. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What'sIt from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

(Child's name), **what did you find in the wardrobe?** Ask the other children: **Why do you think there wasn't anything in the wardrobe?** Encourage children to respond. **Those are good ideas! Well, I think it's time we find out how an**

empty wardrobe fits into today's part of The Big God Story. Do you know what time it is?

The Big God Story

Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20—21

Jesus Is Alive

Storytelling Technique: Shadow Play

SUPPLIES

- Sound effects: Garden, Twinkling Stars, Sheep, Celebration (see Resources)

PREPARE AHEAD

Note: All bolded content is dialogue the Storyteller will use for narration. Actors will bring the scenes to life with movement and still poses. After actors have performed one action, they'll freeze, holding the position until the next pose. Tech and actor cues appear in italic type.

RELATE

Actors get to their places, set up for the first scene, and freeze. Once the light is turned on behind the scrim, actors are "on" until the end of the storytelling section. Welcome children and lead them in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Hold up Bible. **Friends, what book am I holding?** Children respond. **That's right, the Bible. It's filled with God's Word and helps us know Him. All of the words in the Bible are true. We call the Bible "The Big God Story" because God is big, His story is big, and He invites us to be a part of it!**

Scene 1: The Garden. Actor 1: tree; Actor 2: Adam, cross; Actor 3: Eve, Jesus in front of cross. *Tech: Turn on scrim light.* Actors begin first scene. Actor 1 stands with arms outstretched like a tree—not cross. Actors 2 and 3 begin in crouched position, like rocks.

The Big God Story began in a beautiful garden that stood between four grand rivers. *Tech: Cue Garden sound effect.* Tree sways and moves slightly. Two rocks slowly stand to upright position. Adam will place arms strongly on hips when Storyteller says his name. Eve will smooth out hair and gesture simply when her name is said. **The very first people God made to live in the garden of Eden with Him were named Adam ... and Eve.** Eve turns to tree, picks fruit, and takes bite. Hands fruit to Adam. He takes bite. **It wasn't long before Adam and Eve disobeyed God; they sinned.** Adam and Eve kneel and put faces in hands. **Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and made a bad choice, they weren't allowed to be in the garden anymore. They couldn't be as close to God as they once were. But God made a promise that someday there would be a Savior.** Actors who were Adam and Eve stand. Adam becomes cross; Eve stands in front of cross, arms stretched out as Jesus on cross. **This promised Savior would forgive us, and all the people who trust Him, of our sins—the bad choices we make and the things we do wrong—so we can know God and be with Him forever. And so the people on earth began to wait for this Promise to come.**

Scene 2: Covenant. Actor 1: Abraham; Actors 2 and 3: God's people (begin in crouched or sitting position).

One day, God spoke to a man named Abraham. Abraham kneels and looks heavenward. **The Lord God made a covenant with Abraham. A covenant is a very special promise. He promised Abraham that his family would grow** (Actor 2 stands) **and grow.** Actor 3 stands. **God said that counting Abraham's future family would be like**

trying to count the stars in the sky. Tech: Cue Twinkling Stars sound effect. His family would grow so big that it would become a very special nation. His family would be God's people. Actors 2 and 3 suggested motions: shake hands with each other, walk arm in arm, kneel to pray. **God wanted the whole world to see the way His people were living and want to be a part of His family! God also told Abraham that someday the Redeemer would come from his family.**

Scene 3: Isaac Is Born. Actor 1: Abraham; Actor 2: Sarah.

Abraham and his wife, Sarah, waited many years for God to fulfill His promise. Abraham and Sarah stand arm-in-arm. **Then it happened. Sarah had a baby just as God promised.** Sarah lifts arms as if holding and rocking baby from side-to-side. Abraham drops into crouching position and freezes. **God was doing just what He told Abraham He would do.** Sarah lowers arms to side and freezes. **Abraham and Sarah named their son Isaac. When Isaac grew up, he had a son named Jacob. When Jacob grew up, he had 12 sons. The family of God grew and grew and grew. God used prophets, priests, and kings to talk to His people and show them the very best way to live.**

Scene 4: Silence. Actors freeze in place.

Then one day ... God was silent. Tech: Turn off light behind scrim. He was still working in the lives of His people, but He chose not to say anything to them through a prophet, a priest, or a king. Not one word. And so the people waited, and waited, and waited for The Promise.

Scene 5: Announcement. Actor 1: Angel; Actor 2: Mary. Tech: Turn on scrim light.

After many, many years, God was ready to end the silence. He sent an angel named Gabriel to a young woman named Mary. Angel stands gesturing to Mary. Mary drops to knees—not bowing. **He told her she was going to have a baby—God's Son—who would be the Savior for all people. This was it! The promise God made in the garden—the promise to send a Savior—was coming true!**

Scene 6: Jesus is born. Actors are all shepherds.

On the night Jesus was born, God sent angels to announce His birth to shepherds in a field nearby. Tech: Cue Sheep sound effect. Actors respond/gesture to one another according to narration. **The shepherds were so excited that they went to see baby Jesus. They then went and told everyone what they'd seen and heard. The promised Savior was born in Bethlehem! Actors freeze in place. Tech: Turn out light behind scrim.** Actors may leave if possible.

Jesus grew up in a way that was pleasing to God. He never made a bad choice or did anything wrong. Not even once! Jesus taught people the very best way to live. He cared for those who were hungry, healed people who were hurt or sick, and even brought people who had died back to life! He showed that He is God. Isn't that amazing? God became a man so He could be the Savior and bring us back to Himself.

Jesus is the Savior God promised to send. We're forgiven of our sins because of Jesus' sacrifice. Can someone tell us what kind of sacrifice Jesus made? What did Jesus do for us? Allow a few children to retell what happened on Good Friday and at the resurrection. That's right! Jesus came to earth and gave His life on the cross. He paid the punishment for our sins. When we choose to believe that Jesus, God's only Son, died for our sins and accept His love in our hearts and lives, we get to be with God forever! But Jesus didn't stay dead, did He? Children answer. No! After He died, Jesus' friends took His body, wrapped it in linen cloth, and placed Him in a tomb. Then they closed the tomb by rolling a very large stone in front of it. When they came back on the third

day, Jesus wasn't there! The tomb was empty. An angel told Jesus' friends that He had risen! He came back to life, just like He promised. Jesus is alive! *Tech: Cue Celebration sound effect.*

Friends, what was in the **Wardrobe of Wonder**? Pause for responses. **Nothing, you're right!** The wardrobe was empty to remind us that the tomb was empty too. **God the Father brought His Son Jesus back to life! He is alive! The Big God Story doesn't end there. Do you know why?** Children answer. **You're right. God loves us and wants us to know Him and His great love. God wants us to be a part of The Big God Story!**

RESPOND:: 20 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

RELATE

Today we heard a special telling of The Big God Story. We heard how Jesus died for us and rose from the grave! He is alive! Because of Jesus, we get to be with God forever and ever. He wants us to be a part of The Big God Story.

I wonder ... What would it be like to see the empty tomb?

I wonder ... How does it make me feel to know that Jesus is alive?

I wonder ... How do I feel about God right now?

BLESS:: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)
- [HomeFront Weekly: Lesson 8 \(see Resources\)](#)

RELATE

This week before children leave, enthusiastically assure them of God's great love and promises for them.

Hold hands with children and form a circle together. **Let's all raise our hands together and say, "Jesus is alive!"** Repeat two more times and then speak the blessing taken from Revelation 1:8:

Children, may you always remember that you're deeply loved by the God who was, and is, and is to come. He will live forever!