



**HEAD**

### THE BIBLE IS TRUSTWORTHY

The Bible is God's true, perfect and authoritative message to us.



**HEART**

### JESUS CONNECTION

God calls Jesus "The Word" in John 1:1. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to the earth. He is the living example of God's words and the exact representation of God the Father (Hebrews 1:3).



**HANDS**

### LIFEWISE QUALITY

**QUALITY** – Introduction to LifeWise character qualities.

## INTRODUCTIONS

### Personal Introductions | 5–8 Min

- ♦ Teacher: Introduce yourself, tell the class a few personal things of interest (show a picture of your family, list your hobbies or interests, etc.) and share why you enjoy teaching LifeWise classes.
- ♦ Volunteers: Introduce the volunteers and have them share a couple of personal facts and why they volunteer.

### Classroom Introductions | 3–5 Min

- ♦ Class Structure: Explain that each class will typically include an activity and a Bible passage to read and discuss. Share what part of the Bible students will study:
  - ✦ Year 1: The Law and Prophets (Old Testament)
  - ✦ Year 2: The Life and Teachings of Jesus (New Testament)
  - ✦ Year 3: Living Out Jesus' Mission (New Testament)
- ♦ Head, Heart, Hands: Use the graphics to introduce the HHH concept. Show an example of the HHH handout they will work on during class or at home after each lesson.
  - ✦ Head – Learn what the Bible says.
  - ✦ Heart – Explore how God can change our hearts to be more like His.
  - ✦ Hands – Determine how to live out God's instructions.
- ♦ Your Rules and Expectations
  - ✦ Public School rules will still be in effect at LifeWise Academy.
  - ✦ Be present and participate during class.
  - ✦ Bible Verse: Introduce or review how to look up a Bible verse, then challenge students to navigate to a verse of your choice that aligns with the classroom rules (e.g., Luke 6:31)

## SESSION STARTERS

### Name Juggling | 5–10 Min

- ◆ Instruct students to stand in a circle (about 10 students per circle) an arm's length away from those on their right and left. Provide four balls per circle. Before beginning the game, tell students that they must remember whom they throw the ball to. Throw a ball to a student in the circle. That student must say their own name and throw the ball to someone else, who will say their own name and pass it again.
- ◆ Play continues until each student has said their name once. Challenge students to play again in the same order and keep adding balls until all four balls are being thrown at once. If you have more than one circle, have them compete by seeing which group can juggle the most balls at once.

### One Thing You Need to Know About Me | 5–15 Min

- ◆ Pass out paper or student journals and pens. Everyone will write down their name and one unique thing about themselves, fold their papers and place them into a container. Mix them up.
- ◆ Read the unique fact on each paper without giving away who wrote it down. Allow the class to guess which statement belongs with which student.
  - ◇ For a large class, pull out four pieces of paper and call the names of the people on the papers to come forward. Read the unique fact on each paper without giving away who wrote it down. Allow the class to guess what statement belongs with which student.
  - ◇ For a smaller class, read one statement at a time and have the class guess who wrote it.

### Fact or Fiction | 5–10 Min

- ◆ Read the statements below one by one, asking the class to vote whether they think the statement is fact or fiction. Consider using the middle school slide template, whiteboard (or large pieces of paper) to display the statements so you can reveal the answer on the next slide (or the back of the paper).
  - ◇ One of the most popular pet names in the U.S.A. is Fluffy. (*Fiction; Max.*)
  - ◇ The yo-yo was originally developed as a weapon in China. (*Fiction.*)
  - ◇ Humans have unique fingerprints. Gorillas have unique nose prints. (*Fact.*)
  - ◇ Smoking is the leading cause of house fires in the U.S.A. (*Fiction; Cooking.*)
  - ◇ If you are stung by a jellyfish, you should have someone urinate on the sting. (*Fiction.*)
  - ◇ The average American eats 46 slices of pizza per year. (*Fact.*)
  - ◇ The first music record ever featured "Mary Had a Little Lamb." (*Fact.*)
  - ◇ The bat is the only mammal that flies. (*Fact.*)
  - ◇ Professional baseball umpires are required to wear black underwear. (*Fact.*)
  - ◇ It takes 25 feet of wire to make a slinky. (*Fiction; 63 feet.*)
- ◆ How did you know if each answer was fact or fiction? Is there somewhere you could check these answers to make sure I am telling you the truth?
- ◆ Knowing the answers to these questions isn't essential, but today we are going to talk about an important subject. It could completely change your life: How do we know the Bible is trustworthy?

## 52 Card Pick-Up | 5–10 Min

- ♦ Divide the class into teams, and give each team a deck of cards. Make sure each deck has a different image on the back so teams can identify their cards. Ask for one volunteer on each team to flip the cards so they scatter all over the classroom at the same time. Count to three and let them scatter the cards. The teams will then locate all their cards and put them in the right order (Ace–King), in their proper suits, by lining them up on the floor. The first team to finish putting them in the correct order wins.
- ♦ You are probably wondering what 52 card pick-up has to do with learning about the Bible. The Bible contains 66 books written by at least 40 different men who lived over a time period of 1,500 years and in a variety of places (3 continents). Most of these men never met. Rather, they were given a message from God that was written down on scrolls and then organized over time into types of writing, just as you organized the playing cards into different suits. The incredible thing is that all these messages match one another.

## BIBLE LESSON: BIBLE FACTS | 10–20 Min

*[Use the middle school slide template to create a presentation using the following information. Use as many pictures and visuals as possible. If slides are not an option, print off main points and pictures as visual aids.]*

### Introduction

- ♦ The Bible makes claims about itself. It says it is more than just a rule book, a book of wise sayings or one of many ways we can know truth or spiritual things. So what does the Bible say about itself?

### The Bible Says It Is the Inspired Word of God

- ♦ Ask a student to read 2 Timothy 3:16–17, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, rebuking, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
- ♦ Who inspired the Bible? (God.)
  - ♦ *Inspired* is a word that means “God breathed.”
  - ♦ God inspired, or guided, men on what to write down through the influence of the **Holy Spirit**.
- ♦ Why did God give us His Word? (So we are able to know God and follow Him.)
- ♦ The Bible claims to be God’s very words to us. But, you might wonder, can we prove it?
  - ♦ This claim cannot be proven by outside evidence.
  - ♦ Instead, as we read it, the Holy Spirit who inspired it enables us to recognize its claims about God and the Bible as true. In other words, we see it more clearly as we learn more.

### The Bible Says It Is Perfect

- ♦ Ask a student to read Psalm 18:30, “God—His way is perfect; the Word of the Lord is pure. He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.”
- ♦ God is perfect, or without flaw or fault. Because God is perfect, everything He says and does is perfect. Therefore, His Word must be perfect too.

## The Bible Says It Is True

- ◆ Ask a student to read 2 Samuel 7:28, “Lord God, You are God; Your words are true, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant.” Also read John 17:17, “Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth.”
  - ◇ God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18), so His Word can be trusted. It is true in the sense that it contains no factual errors. The big, fancy word is *inerrant*, or “without error.”
  - ◇ Simply put, God’s Word does not (nor does it promise to) cover every fact there is to know, but what it does say about any particular subject is true.
- ◆ The Bible makes claims about itself that we must take seriously. Faith is not blindly believing something.
  - ◇ It is always a belief based on evidence. We see that there is sufficient proof to justify our belief.
  - ◇ Examples of such evidence are in the Extended Lesson Resources below.

## Big Ideas

- ◆ **The Bible is trustworthy.** Why does it matter that the Bible is trustworthy? (Allow students to discuss.) If the Bible is trustworthy, and it claims to be the book that records God’s inspired, perfect and true words, then it is also authoritative. We must allow it to instruct us how to think and live. God’s words are superior to all other authorities, opinions and traditions and, as such, are meant to be a standard for us in every area of our lives.

## Discussion Questions

- ◆ What does it mean to say that the Bible is inspired by God?
- ◆ What is God’s main purpose in giving us His word?
- ◆ Why is it important to consider whether the Bible’s claims about itself are true or false?
- ◆ What type of evidence is there that the Bible is true?
- ◆ What does it mean to have faith in something?
- ◆ Can you explain what it means to be trustworthy in your own words? If the Bible really is trustworthy, how should we treat it or respond to it?

## JESUS CONNECTION



God calls Jesus “The Word” in John 1:1. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to the earth. He is the living example of God’s words and the exact representation of God the Father (Hebrews 1:3).



## REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

### Suggested Video | 5–10 Min

BibleProject Video: *The Story of the Bible*; Full video: 5:11.

### Discussion Questions

- ♦ Print and cut the Discussion Question Strips and place them in a jar. Over the course of the class, as time allows, select a new student to pull out a strip and answer the questions throughout your time together.

### Class Teams

- ♦ Divide the class into three teams for the entire year (trimester/semester, etc). Use a primary color to designate each team. Each group will choose a group name that includes their color (e.g., Green Eggs and Ham, Blueberries, Yellow Stars, etc.).
- ♦ This way students can quickly divide into teams and play a review game. Keep a prize bucket (dollar store items, LifeWise swag, etc.) and award a prize to each member of the winning team when they win a game.

### Journals

- ♦ Give each student a journal to keep at LifeWise during the year and have them decorate the cover. Notebooks can be used to take notes, journal, answer the Head, Heart, Hands questions, play certain games and keep track of points. If you use primary colored teams, have a color-coordinated notebook for each member of the team to keep track of points, etc.

### The Hot Seat

- ♦ Ask a would-you-rather question to each student as you take attendance. Have them choose and briefly answer. If class time is short, consider asking one or two students every class. Optional questions:
  - ♦ Would you rather have no deodorant for one week or no toothpaste for one week?
  - ♦ Would you rather be the top athlete or the top student?
  - ♦ Would you rather miss the last chapter of a book or the last 10 minutes of a movie?
  - ♦ Would you rather eat lunch with a group of random students or eat alone?
  - ♦ Would you rather go to school 50 years in the future or 50 years in the past?
  - ♦ Would you rather be able to ONLY shout or ONLY whisper?
  - ♦ Would you rather have to clean the school bathroom or the cafeteria?
  - ♦ Would you rather have your school principal over for dinner or your math teacher?
  - ♦ Would you rather have an hour-long bus ride to school or a 30-minute walk to school?
  - ♦ Would you rather spend the day in wet clothes or smelly clothes?
  - ♦ Would you rather go on a field trip to a museum or an amusement park?
  - ♦ Would you rather sleep over in the school library or the school gym?
  - ♦ Would you rather go back to 1st grade or forward to 12th grade?
  - ♦ Would you rather sit next to your best friend during class or on the school bus?
  - ♦ Would you rather carry a book bag filled with heavy books or a book bag filled with jingle bells?
  - ♦ Would you rather do all your family's laundry or cooking?

## LIFEWISE QUALITY | 3–5 Min

### Head, Heart, Hands

Each lesson, we will discuss one way that God can help us to live out His instructions in the Bible. These qualities are not something we can achieve on our own. It is only through God's power that we can develop them day by day.

### Head, Heart, Hands Reinforcement | In-class or take-home

Explain how you will be using the Head, Heart, Hands reinforcement sheets in your class. Whether journaling the questions or giving them the questions to think about at home, demonstrate what they look like and how they will be implemented to get the most out of each class.

## PRAYER

Allow students to share or write down prayer requests. Spend time praying for students and your journey through God's Word.

## EXTENDED LESSON RESOURCES

### Bible Commentary for the Teacher

What kind of evidence does it take to prove that something actually happened? How much evidence is needed? For example, if someone accused your friend of stealing something from you, what evidence would you want before you believed it to be true? There is a large amount of evidence to prove that the Bible's claims are true.

- ◆ **The Bible gives internal evidence through fulfilled prophecy.** Prophecy is a message given by God to His people about something that will happen in the future. The Bible predicts the future in a very specific way. None of these prophecies have been proven false, and 2,000 prophecies have been fulfilled exactly as predicted years or centuries before they happened.
  - ◆ Micah 5:2 – The Savior would be born in Bethlehem. Luke 2:4–7 – Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
  - ◆ Psalm 22:16 – The Savior would have His hands and feet pierced (predicted before crucifixion was invented). John 19:18 – Jesus was crucified.
  - ◆ Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 predict Jerusalem will be destroyed. In 70 A.D., Jerusalem was destroyed. This event was recorded by a Roman historian named Josephus.
  - ◆ Jeremiah 31 predicts that the nation of Israel will be reestablished. In 1948, Israel officially became a country again, almost 2,000 years after it was dissolved.
- ◆ **The Bible gives external evidence through archeological discoveries and historical evidence.** Archeology is the study of ancient people and cultures, while history is the study of past events.
  - ◆ Archeology has never proven any statement in the Bible to be false but instead has verified many statements in the Bible.
    - Luke, a doctor and disciple of Jesus, recorded the books of Luke and Acts. His account has been verified by archeological evidence in 32 countries, 54 cities and nine islands.
    - John, a disciple of Jesus, recorded the books of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and Revelation. John described five porches near the pool of Bethesda. For years, archaeologists thought he was incorrect. In the recent past, the five porches were discovered 40 feet under the ground.

- In 1994, an ancient stone carving was uncovered that referred to the “house of David,” the first archeological evidence of King David outside of the Bible.
- ❖ Historical documents prove that the Bible is accurate.
  - No one doubts that other ancient writers are real or that their writings are inaccurate even though very few copies of their work exist.
    - Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, wrote from 384 B.C. to 332 B.C. We have only five copies of his writing, and the earliest is a copy dated 1,400 years after he lived.
    - Suetonius, a Roman historian, wrote from 70 A.D. – 140 A.D. The earliest writing we have from him is a copy dated 800 years later. We don’t have any surviving copies from Suetonius.
  - We have more copies of the New Testament documents than any other ancient document, and they have not changed over time.
    - We have over 24,000 copies of the New Testament documents. We can date 230 of the 24,000 copies we have of the New Testament to within 550 years and some are much closer. One copy of the book of John was written within about 35 years of John’s lifetime.
    - The most recent major discovery of ancient biblical texts was the Dead Sea Scrolls. Those documents matched the already discovered texts and provided even stronger evidence that the Bible is more accurate than any other ancient historical document.

FOR  
REVIEW  
ONLY

**DO  
NOT  
DISTRIBUTE  
  
FOR  
REVIEW  
ONLY**



### THE BIBLE IS TRUSTWORTHY

2 Timothy 3:16–17; Psalm 18:30; 2 Samuel 8:28



#### THE BIBLE IS TRUSTWORTHY

The Bible is God's true, perfect and authoritative message to us.



#### JESUS CONNECTION

God calls Jesus "The Word" in John 1:1. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to the earth. He is the living example of God's words and the exact representation of God the Father (Hebrews 1:3).



#### LIFEWISE QUALITY

Introduction to LifeWise character qualities.



#### HEAD

What does it mean that the Bible is the "inspired" Word of God?

List two reasons why the Bible is trustworthy.



## HEART

Why does it matter that the Bible is true? What are some reasons you struggle to believe this?

DO  
NOT

Do you believe God's Word should be the highest authority in instructing all people how to think and live? Why or why not?

DISTRIBUTE



## HANDS

Since the Bible is trustworthy, it's important to learn how to use it. This week, start to memorize the books of the Bible, in order, and recite what you've learned for your LifeWise teacher at your next class.

- ◆ If all 66 titles are too much, try just the Old Testament or just the New Testament this week and work on the other one for next time.
- ◆ Google "books of the Bible songs." It's much easier to learn the titles with music!

FOR  
REVIEW  
ONLY

What does it mean for you to be created by God?  
How does that play out in your life, or does it?

How would you describe your personality?

What is one question you would like to ask God in person?

What do you think the purpose of the Bible is?

Is prayer important to you? Why or why not?  
Is it hard or easy for you?

Who is one person you would like to go  
back in history to interview? Why?

Who are your role models and why?

How would you describe good leadership? Would you call  
yourself a leader? Why or why not?

Do you think the Bible is relevant to your life? Why or why not?

Why do you think we have so much anger in the world?

## DISCUSSION QUESTION STRIPS

Print one copy and cut apart the strips. Use as directed during the Bible lesson.

Do you feel pressured to be someone that you're not? Explain.

Why do you think some people bully or attack others?  
What is their motivation?

What is your biggest fear?

Is it easy for you to work toward a goal,  
or do you get frustrated and quit quickly?

What makes relationships hard?

How often do you read the Bible?

What do you think when you hear someone making fun  
of a group of people different than them?

What confuses you about prayer?

If you could take away someone's pain, whose would it be?

## DISCUSSION QUESTION STRIPS

Print one copy and cut apart the strips. Use as directed during the Bible lesson.





**HEAD**

### THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who brought salvation to the world.



**HEART**

### JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus is the Prince of Peace of whom Isaiah and the other Old Testament prophets spoke. Through His sinless life, death and resurrection, Jesus makes right what we made wrong because of sin.



**HANDS**

### LIFEWISE QUALITY

PATIENCE – Being willing to wait.

## BIBLE REVIEW

### MSSL 2 Previous Lesson Review | 1-2 Min

[The previous lesson will vary depending on when Christmas lessons begin each year. Special Lessons may be taught as stand-alone lessons (no review) or the review questions from the next regular lesson can be utilized here.]

Today, we will learn about a message God sent through the prophet Isaiah about the birth of the coming Messiah.

## SESSION STARTERS

### A Surprise Arrival | 5-10 Min

- ♦ If possible, show a short video or compilation (or ask the class if they have seen videos) of soldiers surprising their family or friends when they return from deployment. Do you like videos like these? How do the people being surprised usually react? Why don't we respond that way to the people we see every day?
- ♦ To anticipate means to wait with expectation. We anticipate birthdays or holidays, the first snowfall or first flowers of spring and the release of a new book or video game. In today's lesson, we will see how Isaiah's prophecy of a coming king would cause God's people to wait with great anticipation, eagerly expecting His arrival.

### Worth the Wait? | 5-10 Min

- ♦ What does the phrase "It was worth the wait" mean? Listen to each scenario and tell me if you think the end result would be worth the wait.
  - ◇ You save your money for a year in order to buy the pair of shoes you have always wanted. Would it be worth the wait? Why or why not?

- ❖ You are waiting to catch a bus, but when it shows up it is full. They offer to let you ride for free if you wait an extra hour for another bus. Do you think waiting for the free ride would be worth it? Why or why not?
- ❖ You've been counting down the days until Christmas vacation, but when your sister has emergency surgery to have her appendix out on Christmas Eve, your parents decide to wait to open gifts until she's home. Would it be worth the wait?
- ♦ Today, we will learn about one of God's most important promises to His people through the prophet Isaiah. They would have to wait for hundreds of years for God to fulfill this promise, but this promised king would one day provide everything God's people need.

## BIBLE LESSON: THE PRINCE OF PEACE | 10-20 Min

**God called the prophet Isaiah to speak to the people of Judah.** During Isaiah's ministry, the Northern Kingdom of Israel experienced God's judgment for their sin. Not long after, Judah was threatened by neighboring kingdoms and chose to rely on Assyria for help instead of God. **Isaiah declared God's coming judgment on Judah and stated their distress would be great. But Isaiah also proclaimed a message of hope. Isaiah prophesied about the birth of the Messiah, or "anointed one," who would come to save the people.**

### Isaiah 9:1-3.

**Judah** suffered injustice and violence at the hands of their own people as well as foreign enemies because of their sin against God. But their spiritual darkness was the real problem. They **chose to worship idols instead of the one true God and to live in a way that was empty and wicked. Isaiah's message from the Lord proclaimed that His people would experience gloom, distress and darkness, but it would not last.**

Instead, **where there was darkness, God would bring light** like the sun rising at dawn. **He would increase their joy**, as during the harvest, when God blessed them with an abundant crop. Harvest was the time to celebrate the fruitful gains from their difficult labor. Harvest was the moment when what was hoped for—food to sustain them for the coming year—was realized. **Not only would He increase their joy**, but their size. **God would again raise them from a small people into a great nation.**

### Isaiah 9:4-5.

**Isaiah declared that when God brought this light, the physical and spiritual oppression the people experienced would be completely broken.** The people of God had seen victories before, such as the one over the Midianites, only to see another oppressor rise to power soon after. In the past, peace was always temporary, but **this mighty victory would last forever. Eternal peace was so sure that the tools of war would be burned because they were no longer needed.**

### Isaiah 9:6-7.

**God** would not forget or forsake His people, but He **did not give** His people **a timetable for this coming victory. Instead, God told them to look for a sign.** Salvation would come, but it would come, not from an army or treaty between nations, but in the most unlikely place—God's coming light would be marked by **the birth of a baby.**

Isaiah described this baby as both a child and a son. **The child would be physically born in the family line of King David, and His birth would be the ultimate fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: a virgin would conceive, have a son and name him Immanuel, which means "God with us" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23).**

Isaiah described the child's reign in greater detail with four names: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace. This king would rule with perfect justice and righteousness, something that could only be accomplished by the zeal of the Lord Almighty.

### Summary of Luke 1:26–38, 2:1–20; Matthew 1.

God did save His people, time and again, but like the Northern Kingdom, their sin ultimately led to their judgment. Judah was taken captive by Babylon, returned from exile and lived as conquered people under Greek and Roman rule. And still they waited and watched for God's promised deliverance through the Messiah.

About 600 years after Isaiah received this vision, God fulfilled His promise. He sent the Messiah, His own Son, to the earth in the form of a baby. God chose a young girl named Mary and her fiancé, Joseph, both from the family line of David, to care for Him. He sent the angel Gabriel to announce the good news to them: Mary would be the mother of a special baby. He would be both the Son of God and the eternal King (Luke 1:32–33), and His name would be Immanuel (Matt. 1:23). God's Spirit caused Mary, though a virgin, to become pregnant, uniting Jesus' divine Spirit with a human body. And when Jesus was born, the angels and shepherds celebrated, because the light God had promised so long ago had finally come.

### Big Ideas

- ♦ Jesus brings everlasting light where there is darkness. Isaiah said that the Messiah would bring light to the spiritual darkness His people experienced. This prophecy was not fulfilled in Isaiah's lifetime but through Jesus. John affirmed that Jesus was the promised Messiah when he said, "In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it" (Jn. 1:4–5).
- ♦ Jesus brings everlasting peace. Through Christ, we have internal peace (Gal. 5:22–23; Col. 3:15). Because we have received forgiveness, righteousness and lives of meaning and purpose in Christ, we can let go of anxiety, fear and doubt and rest in Him. Christ also provides us peace with others (Matt. 5:9; Eph. 2:16). Sin causes conflict in our relationships, but the gospel provides a way for relationships to be healed. Most importantly, Christ has provided us with peace with God (Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:18). Before we trusted in Christ, we were enemies with God, living in outright rebellion against our Creator, and were under His wrath (Rom. 5:6–11). But when Christ came, He offered His life as a payment for our sin. Because of Christ, we are forgiven, and God's justice is satisfied. Now, in Him, we are no longer at odds with God; He has adopted us into His family as sons and daughters.
- ♦ Jesus brings everlasting righteousness. Isaiah lived at a time when the people rejected God's word, worshiped idols and lived in sin. During His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated perfect righteousness by fully obeying God the Father. Jesus' righteousness is more than an example or pattern to follow or evidence we can trust our King. Instead, Jesus willingly traded places with us, taking our sin and giving us His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).

### Discussion Questions

- ♦ How do the circumstances of Jesus' birth help us understand how His rule is different from other kings?
- ♦ What aspects of Jesus' character set Him apart from what we might expect from a king?

- ◆ How do you think God's people might have responded to Isaiah's message that God would send a Messiah to bring light to the darkness and establish His righteous kingdom?
- ◆ The promised Messiah did not come for almost 600 years. What would it be like to wait for the promised King for so long?
- ◆ Jesus is described as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace. Which description is most meaningful to you? Why?

## REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

### Suggested Video | 5–10 Min

BibleProject Video: *Shalom/Peace*; Full video: 3:28.

### Still Waiting | 5–10 Min

- ◆ Read or provide copies of Isaiah 9:1–7. God's people had to wait for hundreds of years for the Messiah's birth, but one day, Jesus was born in Bethlehem to fulfill God's promise. We don't have to wait for Jesus' birth anymore, but parts of Isaiah's prophecy still remain unfulfilled.
  - ◇ What parts of Isaiah's prophecy haven't happened yet? Do you think those things are worth waiting for?
  - ◇ Do you think God can be trusted to fulfill those parts of this prophecy? Why or why not?
- ◆ Read or provide copies of Revelation 21:1–7, 22–5. Jesus is the Lamb John mentions here when He comes back a final time to reign as King over everything forever.
  - ◇ How is the revelation that John saw similar to Isaiah's prophecy? Consider drawing a compare/contrast chart on the board to record the students' ideas.
  - ◇ Do you think Jesus' final victory will be worth the wait?

## JESUS CONNECTION



Jesus is the Prince of Peace of whom Isaiah and the other Old Testament prophets spoke. Through His sinless life, death and resurrection, Jesus makes right what we made wrong because of sin.

## LIFEWISE QUALITY | 3–5 Min

**PATIENCE** – Being willing to wait.

### Living LifeWise

God always keeps His promises, so we can choose to live God's way while we wait patiently for God to act.

### LWQ Script

Throughout the Old Testament—from Adam and Eve (Gen. 3) to David (2 Sam. 7) to Isaiah (Isa. 9) and the prophets—God repeated His promise that the Messiah would come. So His people waited. Sometimes



they waited patiently; many times, they got distracted and forgot all about what God was doing. But after thousands of years, and at just the right time (Gal. 4:4), Jesus arrived. And by His birth, death and resurrection, God fulfilled His promise to defeat sin, death and Satan so we can be redeemed.

Many things in our world are still broken because of sin. But Jesus promised to come again to rule as King over all things and make all things new and right with God. Even as we wait for His return, we can ask His Spirit to help us trust Him and keep living God's way while we wait for God to work on our behalf and for His glory.

### Head, Heart, Hands Reinforcement | In-class or take-home

- ◆ **Head Questions**
  - ◇ What names did Isaiah use for the coming King?
  - ◇ How did Isaiah describe Jesus' future kingdom?
- ◆ **Heart Questions**
  - ◇ God's people waited for centuries for Jesus to come. Do you think prophecies like Isaiah's helped them have patience? Why or why not?
  - ◇ The Bible says that God always keeps His promises. How can this fact help you have patience even when things are hard right now?
- ◆ **Hands Challenge**
  - ◇ Having patience doesn't mean that waiting is easy or feels good. Think of someone you know who is waiting for something (good or hard). Write them a note this week to encourage them while they wait (or tell them in person, if you prefer).

## EXTENDED LESSON RESOURCES

### Bible Commentary for the Teacher

The historical background of Isaiah 9 helps us to understand the significance of the Messiah's birth in an even deeper way.

- ◆ **The geographical location (Isaiah 9:1).** Isaiah prophesied light to a distressed, gloomy land. Zebulun and Naphtali were territories that bordered one another in northern Israel and were devastated by the Assyrian invasion. "The way of the sea" and "the land east of the Jordan" were ancient international highways that linked Egypt and Mesopotamia and crossed in northern Israel, so that area was filled with Gentiles. But Isaiah said it was there, in "Galilee of the nations," that the light would shine. And it was in Galilee that Jesus would one day live and begin His ministry (Matt. 2:23; Luke 2:39-40).
- ◆ **The physical state of the people (Isaiah 9:1).** The Messiah was promised, and ultimately came, to hurting people. The region of northern Israel was distressed because the Assyrian invasion had destroyed the land and exiled many people (2 Kings 15:29). Isaiah was writing to a people without hope; people who were oppressed by the mighty Assyrian army and had no one to come to their rescue. In Jesus' time, foreign empires still oppressed the people, and the Jews looked down on the people of Galilee because of their frequent interactions with Gentiles.
- ◆ **The emotional state of the people (Isaiah 9:1, 3).** Because of the numerous wars waged and the heavy taxes owed to foreign powers, the Israelites could not fully enjoy their crops at harvest. They were fearful, distressed and uncertain. But when the Messiah came, the people's joy would

be even greater than the joy they experienced at harvest time. And because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we can experience the ultimate joy of forgiveness and a relationship with God.

Isaiah also uses special titles to describe the coming Messiah to help us understand His greatness:

- ♦ **Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6–7):** The term *wonderful* describes God Himself or God's miraculous deliverance or marvelous miracles in the Old Testament. *Counselor* is a word that describes a planner or an advisor who provided the military strategies to a king in battle (2 Sam. 15:12; 1 Chr. 26:14; 27:32–33; Prov. 11:14; 24:6). So this title means one who is “wonderful in counsel” (Isa. 28:29) or a planner “who has done wonderful things” (Isa. 25:1; 29:14). As our Wonderful Counselor, Jesus the Messiah performed the most extraordinary works in history: He was rejected and crucified, but He rose from the dead, claiming victory over death and opening the only way of salvation for us.
- ♦ **Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6–7).** This title points to the Messiah's divine nature. Jesus revealed His divine power through His miracles and proclamations. In the Gospels, Jesus healed and fed many people, expelled demons and silenced the raging waves. In the Gospel of John, Jesus proclaimed that He is God with seven “I AM” statements: I am the bread of life (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51); I am the light of the world (John 8:12); I am the door of the sheep (John 10:7, 9); I am the good shepherd (John 10:11, 14); I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25); I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6); and I am the true vine (John 15:1, 5). The Jews clearly understood that Jesus was making Himself equal with God because they tried to kill Him in response (John 5:18).
- ♦ **Everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6–7)** means “father of eternity.” This title is similar to “Ancient of Days” in the Book of Daniel (7:9, 13, 22) and to “Alpha and Omega” in the Book of Revelation (1:8; 21:6; 22:13). In the ancient Near East, the term “father” referred to kings who cared for their people (Isa. 22:20–22). Although Jesus is not usually called “father,” in His earthly ministry, He functioned as a father who protected His people and led them to obey the commandments of God (Matt. 23:35–40; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–28).
- ♦ **Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6–7)** means that the Messiah is the One to bring peace to His people and the kingdom. The term *peace* is not used just to describe the absence of war in the Old Testament, rather peace is a state of the complete unity and fullness of creation which reflects God's goodness. This title is referring to a reality that will only be accomplished with a new and perfect Heaven and Earth.



### THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who brought salvation to the world.



### JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus is the Prince of Peace of whom Isaiah and the other Old Testament prophets spoke. Through His sinless life, death and resurrection, Jesus makes right what we made wrong because of sin.



### LIFEWISE QUALITY

PATIENCE – Being willing to wait.



### HEAD

What names did Isaiah use for the coming King?

How did Isaiah describe Jesus' future kingdom?



## HEART

God's people waited for centuries for Jesus to come. Do you think prophecies like Isaiah's helped them have patience? Why or why not?

The Bible says that God always keeps His promises. How can this fact help you have patience even when things are hard right now?



## HANDS

Having patience doesn't mean that waiting is easy or feels good. Think of someone you know who is waiting for something (good or hard). Write them a note this week to encourage them while they wait (or tell them in person, if you prefer).



**HEAD****FEAR GIVES WAY**

Jesus' resurrection is a life-changing event.

**HEART****JESUS CONNECTION**

Jesus rose from the dead just as He said He would, proving He is the Son of God and worthy of our worship. When we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we are brought into God's family and can joyfully serve Him.

**HANDS****LIFEWISE QUALITY**

**BOLDNESS** – Choosing to do the right thing, even if you are afraid.

**BIBLE REVIEW****MSSL 3 Previous Lesson Review | 1–2 Min**

*[The previous lessons will vary depending on when Easter lessons begin each year. Special Lessons may be taught as stand-alone lessons (no review) or the review questions from the next regular lesson can be utilized here.]*

Today, we will read the disciple Matthew's account of Jesus rising from the dead.

**SESSION STARTERS****Boldness Challenge | 5–10 Min**

- ◆ Before class, make a line on the floor using masking tape. Tape numbered signs (1–5) along the line with 1 at one end and 5 at the other end. During class, explain that the tape line is a scale from 1 to 5. You will read a series of actions, and based on their own preferences, students will stand on the tape line to show whether each action requires a lot of boldness (5), not much boldness (1) or somewhere in between.
  - ◇ Asking for your favorite meal for dinner.
  - ◇ Showing up to a party where you don't know anyone.
  - ◇ Standing in front of the room to give a speech.
  - ◇ Sharing your thoughts in class when you know others disagree with you.
  - ◇ Asking the teacher about a grade you received on an assignment.
  - ◇ Standing up for your younger sibling who's being picked on.
  - ◇ Doing a physical challenge (a climbing wall, new sport, etc.) for the first time.
- ◆ We don't all display boldness in the same way, but being bold often requires facing our fears and doubts. In today's story, the women who followed Jesus came to the tomb full of fear and doubt but because of what they saw and heard, they left full of boldness and joy.

**Undefeated | 5–10 Min**

- ◆ Challenge the class to think of movies, books or other stories where the hero suffers what looks like ultimate defeat. *[Examples: Sherlock Holmes' apparent death in Sherlock. The Empire Strikes*

Back, ending with Han Solo encased in carbonite and Luke Skywalker nursing a severed hand. Ben Gates entering what looks like an empty treasure room in National Treasure.] Write the list on the board if desired.

- ♦ For the three days after Jesus' crucifixion, everything seemed lost. Jesus was dead. The disciples were hiding in fear of a similar fate. All of their hopes seemed broken beyond repair. But when Sunday morning came, some women returned from His tomb with a bold and powerful message, one that restored all their hope in a way they had never imagined possible.

## BIBLE LESSON: FEAR GIVES WAY | 10-20 Min

### Summary of Matthew 27:59-66.

Jesus was crucified on Friday, and His body was hastily prepared for burial because of the approaching Sabbath day. The Jewish religious leaders were afraid that Jesus' disciples would steal His body and claim that He had risen from the dead to fulfill Jesus' earlier promises. They asked Pilate, the Roman governor, for permission to make Jesus' tomb secure. The Roman guards sealed Jesus' tomb and placed guards outside the entrance all day and night.

### Matthew 28:1-6.

Early Sunday morning, when the Sabbath was complete, some of the women who followed Jesus returned to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body (Mark 16:1). These women had seen Jesus suffer and die on the cross. Their hearts were heavy and confused about the events of the last few days. They may have wondered if the soldiers would allow them to anoint Jesus' body or how they could possibly move the stone away from the entrance to the tomb, even if they received permission to enter (Mk. 16:1).

At the tomb, however, they found three unexpected sights. First, the stone had already been rolled back from the tomb. The purpose of this gesture was not to let Jesus out, but to let others in. What was once used to seal in a dead man was now an ordinary rock from which to share the news that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

Second, the Roman soldiers, upon seeing the angel and experiencing the earthquake (v. 2), were overcome with fear, collapsing "like dead men." They couldn't attack, run to Pilate or call for backup. The living, breathing, but paralyzed Roman soldiers were closer to death than the One who had laid in the tomb hours before.

Third, the angel who had rolled back the stone was sitting on it waiting for them. The women were afraid, but the angel calmed their fears. He told them the good news: Jesus was no longer dead and buried. He had risen!

Because the stone had been removed, they could peer inside and see for themselves. There was no body in the tomb, just a linen cloth where they had laid Jesus. The tomb was empty. Death's power had been defeated.

### Matthew 28:7-10.

The angel invited the women to enter into the tomb, but they were not to remain there. They had received good news and were commanded to share it. Filled with joy and great fear, they left the tomb to tell the rest of the disciples the good news. This was not the terror they felt at seeing the angel, however. This fear was a deep respect and awe for God based on what they had seen and heard.

**The women didn't run far**, however, **before they came face-to-face with** an even more unexpected sight than an angel—they saw **Jesus Himself**. Jesus did not tell the two women anything the angel had not already shared, but **He appeared to confirm that the angel's words were true. The evidence was undeniable. Jesus was alive** (Matt. 28:11)!

## Big Ideas

- ◆ **Jesus' physical body died and was raised to life.** Everything hinges on that empty tomb. The **resurrection** proves that God accepted Jesus' sacrifice for our sins. In 1 Corinthians 15:17, the apostle Paul was clear: if Jesus is still dead, then we are still dead in our sins. But since Jesus was raised from death and given a new resurrected body, those who trust in Jesus' sacrifice are made alive in Him and forgiven of our sins. Jesus conquered death for us, ensuring eternal life for us in new resurrected bodies in which we will never perish (John 3:16).
- ◆ **God provides evidence for our faith in Him.** God doesn't ask us to trust in Him without giving us proof or confirmation that His Word is true. On Easter morning, God sent an angel to announce Jesus' resurrection, and then Jesus appeared to the women so that they would have no doubts about the truth. And even for us today, "The empty tomb is that silent testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ which has never been refuted."<sup>1</sup>

## Discussion Questions

- ◆ What unexpected things did the women encounter after they arrived at the tomb?
- ◆ Why does it matter that Jesus's resurrection is physical and not just spiritual?
- ◆ How does the soldiers' experience compare and contrast with the women who come to the tomb?
- ◆ Who showed boldness in this story? Who did not? What do you think made the difference?
- ◆ What emotions and expectations might Jesus' disciples have had before the women went to the tomb? What about after they came back?

## REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

### Suggested Video | 5–10 Min

BibleProject Video: *Euangelion/Gospel*; Full video: 4:15.

### Share the News | 5–10 Min

- ◆ How we share a message can vary. We often use a different tone or volume or hold our body in different ways, depending on the message and situation. Let's say you are asked to deliver a very important message to a teacher in the middle of class. Describe how you might share that message (tone, volume, level of privacy, etc.) in each of these situations:
  - ◇ You don't understand what the message is supposed to say.
  - ◇ The message is very bad news for a student in the class.
  - ◇ The message is bad news for your good friend who is in that class.
  - ◇ That teacher is the head football coach, and he's just been selected the coach of the year.
- ◆ Why does good news typically inspire us to share boldly? The angel told the women at the tomb to tell Jesus' disciples what they had seen and what to do next. This was the very best news possible.

<sup>1</sup> Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*: Vol. 1 (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1979), 226.

How do you think they shared the news? What does it look like to share about the resurrection boldly today?

### JESUS CONNECTION



Jesus rose from the dead just as He said He would, proving He is the Son of God and worthy of our worship. When we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we are brought into God's family and can joyfully serve Him.

### LIFEWISE QUALITY | 3–5 Min

**BOLDNESS** – Choosing to do the right thing, even if you are afraid.

#### Living LifeWise

God is all-powerful and good, so we can live His way boldly even in hard or scary situations.

#### LWQ Script

It's easy to see the boldness of the women and the disciples grow as news of Jesus' resurrection spread. This kind of victory energizes us, and we can't help but tell others. But there's another kind of boldness in the story that is easy to miss. At the first possible moment, the women went to His tomb. They planned to march up to a soldier-guarded tomb and ask to anoint Jesus' body. Sad and scared, they still boldly intended to do the right thing without knowing they would be greeted, not by gruff and angry soldiers, but by an angel and an empty tomb.

Boldness certainly means sharing about who God is and what He's done for us, but sometimes it means choosing to live His way in the face of hard and scary things. In either case, it is easier to be bold when we remember that God is all-powerful and always good, in every situation, and His Spirit will help us do what is right, not just when it's easy and exciting, but also when we're sad or scared.

### Head, Heart, Hands Reinforcement | In-class or take-home

- ◆ **Head Questions**
  - ◇ What did the women at the tomb see and hear?
  - ◇ The women came to the tomb in great sadness and confusion. How did their feelings change when they heard the news that Jesus rose from death?
- ◆ **Heart Questions**
  - ◇ The women came to the tomb sad and scared, but they left with great joy and a message to share. Why did learning that Jesus is alive result in such a complete change?
  - ◇ Jesus' resurrection means that we, like the women, do not have to be afraid. Why does the fact that Jesus is alive mean we can face every moment of our lives with boldness?
- ◆ **Hands Challenge**



- ✧ Boldness does not mean we act arrogantly or take crazy risks. It means we aren't afraid to do what's right. Choose one of the suggested actions below (or think of one on your own) and pray that God will help you do it with boldness. Look for an opportunity to put it into action this week.

- Support a friend or classmate who is being made fun of
- Choose someone first who is often picked last for your team in the class, gym or a group activity
- Try a new activity that you've always wanted to do but are afraid you'll fail at
- Tell a friend, family member, neighbor or classmate what you're learning about God

## EXTENDED LESSON RESOURCES

### Bible Commentary for the Teacher

God gives us incredible blessings that are only possible through Jesus' bodily resurrection:

- ✦ **We are declared right with God (Mat. 28:4).** Jesus took our sin and gave us His righteousness, or right standing before God.
- ✦ **Jesus destroyed the power sin and Satan have over us (Romans 8:1–2).** We are no longer condemned for our sin (Rom. 8:1) but set free from sin and death. Jesus' death and resurrection fulfilled God's first promise to Adam and Eve in the garden (Gen. 3:15) to crush Satan. Jesus has disarmed Satan so that he cannot win the war against God (Col. 2:15).
- ✦ **We are made alive in Christ (Romans 6:6–8, 8:10–11).** Jesus was raised to life by the power of God; we are raised to life through the power of God's Spirit.
- ✦ **Jesus gives us a new life (Romans 6:4, 8:2; 2 Cor. 5:17).** We are now a completely new person on the inside. God's Spirit cleanses us of sin and empowers us to choose to do what is right.
- ✦ **God adopts us into His family (Romans 8:14–17).** God welcomes us into His spiritual family and declares us to be co-heirs with Christ. We have a share in the inheritance that belongs to Jesus: God will freely give us His eternal love, spiritual blessings and glory.

### In Defense

What we believe about the resurrection matters. It may not seem relevant to our everyday life, but the question of whether Jesus rose from the dead may be the single most important question we ever try to answer. Many books have been written outlining both the evidence for the resurrection and the reasons people don't believe it happened. But whether or not Jesus rose from the dead is a question we cannot shrug off as unimportant. If Jesus did not rise again, there is no foundation for faith in God. And if Jesus did rise again, it means everything God has said and promised is absolutely true and worth committing our lives to.



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#### FEAR GIVES WAY

Jesus' resurrection is a life-changing event.



#### JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus rose from the dead just as He said He would, proving He is the Son of God and worthy of our worship. When we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we are brought into God's family and can joyfully serve Him.



#### LIFEWISE QUALITY

**BOLDNESS** – Choosing to do the right thing, even if you are afraid.



#### HEAD

What did the women at the tomb see and hear?

The women came to the tomb in great sadness and confusion. How did their feelings change when they heard the news that Jesus rose from death?



## HEART

The women came to the tomb sad and scared, but they left with great joy and a message to share. Why did learning that Jesus is alive result in such a complete change?

Jesus' resurrection means that we, like the women, do not have to be afraid. Why does the fact that Jesus is alive mean we can face every moment of our lives with boldness?



## HANDS

Boldness does not mean we act arrogantly or take crazy risks. It means we aren't afraid to do what's right. Choose one of the suggested actions below (or think of one on your own) and pray that God will help you do it with boldness. Look for an opportunity to put it into action this week.

- ◆ Support a friend or classmate who is being made fun of
- ◆ Choose someone first who is often picked last for your team in class, for gym or in a group activity
- ◆ Try a new activity that you've always wanted to do but are afraid you'll fail at
- ◆ Tell a friend, family member, neighbor or classmate what you're learning about God

**HEAD****IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US**

The gift of Christmas is the promise of God's presence.

**HEART****JESUS CONNECTION**

Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary to fulfill the Old Testament prophecy and to affirm that He is the sinless Savior—God in the flesh who came to dwell with people and save us from our sin.

**HANDS****LIFEWISE QUALITY**

COMPASSION – Recognizing the suffering of others and taking action to help.

**BIBLE REVIEW | 1–2 Min****MSSL 4 Previous Lesson Review | 1–2 Min**

*[The previous lessons will vary depending on when Christmas lessons begin each year. For today's review, use the review questions from the beginning of the next lesson you will continue with after Christmas.]*

Today we will read about how God chose and prepared Joseph to be Jesus' earthly father.

**SESSION STARTERS****Jesus Genealogy | 5–10 Min**

- ◆ Divide the class into groups of 3–4 students. Provide Bibles to each group and help students find Matthew 1:1–16 (or provide handouts of the passage). Challenge the groups to read through the genealogy and write down (or circle on the handout) all the names they recognize. Combine all the names the groups recognize into one list. As a class, go over some of the names, allowing students to summarize that person's story from the Bible.
- ◆ This passage records Jesus' genealogy. What is a genealogy? Why would the Jews care about someone's family history? The Jewish people considered a family tree to be one of the most important things about someone. Matthew not only used Jesus' genealogy to show that Jesus was a direct descendent of Abraham, but he also used it to prove another, even more important, claim about Jesus. We'll find out what that claim was in today's story.

**Solve the Riddle | 5–10 Min**

- ◆ Challenge the students to solve these riddles (do as many as you have time for).
  - ◇ A man is lying dead in a field with an unopened package beside him. There are no other creatures in the field. How did he die? *(The package is a parachute that failed to open when he jumped from a plane.)*

- ❖ There are six eggs in a basket. Six people each took one egg. How is there still one egg in the basket? (*The last person picked up the basket with the egg still inside.*)
- ❖ Several voices were coming from the other room, but there was only one person sitting quietly there. That person isn't crazy, so what is happening? (*The TV is on.*)
- ◆ These are called lateral-thinking riddles. They help us think about the assumptions we make when we hear something (i.e., that the unopened package in the first riddle was mail). We also have assumptions about how God works or doesn't work in our lives. In today's story, we'll see how what looked like a scandal was actually God at work in miraculous and very unexpected ways.

## BIBLE LESSON: IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US | 10–20 Min

The apostle **Matthew wrote his Gospel primarily for a Jewish audience in the first century.** From the beginning of this book, **Matthew gives evidence, by listing Jesus' physical genealogy, to back up his conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham, the promised King of Israel who will bless all the peoples of the earth** (Matt. 1:1–17; Gen. 12:3; 2 Sam. 7:11–16).

### Matthew 1:18–19.

Next, Matthew immediately points out that when God sent His Son to us as a baby, He did not follow the customary way that the Jews began a family. In fact, **from a human standpoint, Jesus' birth story began with a scandal.**

In our culture, couples get engaged before they get married. In Jesus' day, a Jewish couple was betrothed before they were married. **Betrothal was a legal arrangement between a girl's parents and the man they had chosen for her. Unlike our engagement, the couple were considered legally husband and wife, but still lived in separate homes and were forbidden from having physical relations.** Later an elaborate ceremony was held to make the marriage official by the agreement of witnesses. After this ceremony, the bride and groom would move into a house together.

Matthew made it clear that Joseph did not “father” Jesus (Matt. 1:16). **Mary was already betrothed to Joseph when she was found to be pregnant.** When this was discovered, **Joseph naturally assumed that Mary had been unfaithful to him.** He faced a great dilemma. He did not want to marry a woman who had been unfaithful to him. **It was within Joseph's right to have Mary stoned to death or publically humiliated, but Joseph was a just and kind man. In compassion, he planned to divorce Mary quietly.**

### Matthew 1:20–21.

**God intervened before Joseph could act on his plan, however. He sent an angel in a dream to tell Joseph of His extraordinary plan. The angel directly addressed Joseph's fear that Mary had been unfaithful, assuring him that hers was a miraculous conception.** What seemed to Joseph like a human scandal was God's perfect plan. While everyone in His genealogy was created through natural means, **Jesus' body was created by God's Spirit so that Jesus would not have the sinful nature that is passed down to us from Adam and Eve.**

**The angel also called Joseph a “son of David,”** pointing out that Joseph was part of David's royal family line, through which the promised Messiah would come **and commanded Joseph to take Mary as his wife by completing the final step of the marriage custom. By doing so, Joseph assumed legal fatherhood for the child. Therefore, Jesus was the promised “Son of David.”**



As His earthly father, Joseph also bore responsibility for naming Him. **The angel told Joseph to name the baby Jesus which means “Yahweh is salvation.”** Yahweh is the personal, covenant name of God that He revealed to Moses (Ex. 3:14). **Mary’s son was to be named Jesus, not simply to acknowledge that God is the Savior of His people, but because Jesus Himself would save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).**

### Matthew 1:22–23.

**God chose the details of this extraordinary plan to fulfill His promise through the prophet Isaiah (Is. 7:14).** About 600 years earlier, Isaiah prophesied that a virgin would conceive a son. Isaiah’s prophecy spoke to an immediate fulfillment by a young woman conceiving a son through natural means and naming him Immanuel as a sign of the people of Judah being saved from their enemies. However, **Matthew draws attention to the complete fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy through an actual virgin conceiving a son through supernatural means. Jesus is “Immanuel” or God with us, who brought salvation from sin.**

### Matthew 1:24–25.

**Joseph’s encounter with the angel changed his plans. He took immediate steps to obey God. He woke up and took Mary as his wife.** Yet, he treated her as someone set apart by God and wasn’t physically intimate with her until after she gave birth to Jesus. **When the child was born, Joseph named Him Jesus, as the angel had instructed.**

To human eyes, when Joseph took Mary as his wife, he was admitting that he had sinned with Mary. **Both Joseph’s and Mary’s reputations, and the reputation of their families, would have taken a beating. But in God’s eyes, Joseph showed that he trusted God to do everything that He promised.**

### Big Ideas

- ♦ **Jesus is wholly God and wholly man.** Jesus took on a human nature. There is only one God, and He has forever existed in three Persons—Father, Son, and Spirit. In God’s timing, God the Son took on human nature through the power and work of the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary’s womb, uniting an eternal God with a human body. Jesus is one hundred percent God and one hundred percent man.
- ♦ **Jesus’ human nature was essential to bring us salvation.** If Jesus were conceived by normal means with a human mother and father—not through the Holy Spirit—then He would have been only human and not the God-man we need. If He were only human and not also God, then He couldn’t have lived a sinless life (Ps. 14:2–3). If He couldn’t live a sinless life, then He couldn’t die on the cross as our righteous substitute (Ps. 65:3). If He couldn’t pay the penalty for our sins as a sinless Savior, then we would be lost with no hope of being made right with God (Isa. 53:4–12).
- ♦ **Jesus submitted to God in all things** (Philippians 2:5–8). The all-powerful Creator of the universe humbled Himself by putting on human flesh. He limited His own greatness and power by taking the form of a helpless baby. He chose to grow up as one of us, experiencing all the pain and frustrations of life. He submitted to God the Father through prayer, meditation on the Scriptures, and obedience rather than simply showing His power as God. He loved, served, and laid His life down for His enemies. Only a perfect God could live among sinful people in this compassionate way.

### Discussion Questions

- ♦ In your own words, how would you explain the importance of the virgin birth?

- ◆ The name *Immanuel* means “God with us.” How does God’s presence with His people show His compassion? Why is His presence encouraging?
- ◆ Joseph’s decision to make Mary his wife was costly and difficult. What did he sacrifice to do what God asked? What kind of man do his actions show Joseph was?
- ◆ How does the promise of Jesus as Immanuel change our perspective on difficulties?
- ◆ How does Jesus’ willingness to take up residence among us encourage us to demonstrate compassion?

## REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

### Suggested Video | 5–10 Min

BibleProject Video: *Compassion*; Full video: 4:37.

### Showing Compassion | 5–10 Min

- ◆ This activity can be done as a class or in groups of 3–4 students. Draw a large circle on the board and divide it into four quadrants with an X. In the top quadrant, write 1 - GOD; in the right quadrant, write 2 - JOSEPH; in the bottom quadrant, write 3 - JESUS; leave the left quadrant blank.
- ◆ Give 3–5 minutes for the class or groups to brainstorm specific ways that each person showed compassion. When you call time, have a student volunteer from each group write their ideas inside the quadrants on the board.
- ◆ Look at all the ways you noticed compassion being displayed in today’s story. Which ones stand out most to you? Notice there is one more section. That blank spot represents you and me. Compassion means we see suffering and take action to help, and it can be shown in a lot of ways.
  - ◇ Do you think God expects us to show compassion in the same way that He does or that Jesus did? What about like Joseph did?
  - ◇ Let’s list some acts of compassion that we can show and ask God to help us do them this week. (Write them in the blank spot as students name them.) Close in prayer.

## JESUS CONNECTION



Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary to fulfill Old Testament prophecy and to affirm that He is the sinless Savior—God in the flesh who came to dwell with people and save us from our sin.

## LIFEWISE QUALITY | 3–5 Min

**COMPASSION** – Recognizing the suffering of others and taking action to help.

## Living LifeWise

Because Jesus came to earth to live and die for us, we can sacrifice to show compassion to others.

### LWQ Script

The Christmas story is full of compassion. We see a God who faithfully loved His people and provided the Messiah who could meet their ultimate need. We see a man who sacrificed his own reputation and social standing to protect and care for both Mary and the Christ child. But most of all, we see Jesus Christ. He saw the devastation caused by sin, and He willingly stepped into our world. He experienced all that we experience in this sin-sick world, endured the full wrath of God on the cross and sacrificed Himself so that we can be reconciled to God once again. There is no greater example of compassion, and His Spirit will enable us to sacrifice as He did to show compassion to those around us so that they can know Him too.

### Head, Heart, Hands Reinforcement | In-class or take-home

- ◆ **Head Questions**
  - ◇ What did the angel tell Joseph to do about Mary?
  - ◇ What does the name Immanuel mean?
- ◆ **Heart Questions**
  - ◇ Joseph faced a hard choice between doing what he thought was right and wanting to protect Mary. How did he show compassion before and after the angel spoke to him?
  - ◇ Immanuel means “God with us.” How does Jesus coming to Earth and living a fully human life (one without sin) demonstrate God’s compassion for us?
- ◆ **Hands Challenge**
  - ◇ Suffering is a part of life, but it is easier to face when someone bears it with us. Think of someone who might be hurting or struggling with loneliness, physical illness or pain, a recent loss or another hard situation. Pray for them and write them a note or call them this week to encourage or offer to help them.

## EXTENDED LESSON RESOURCES

### Bible Commentary for the Teacher

The story of Jesus’ miraculous conception shows us God’s faithfulness.

- ◆ **Jesus is the promised Messiah.** From the moment that Adam and Eve sinned, God promised to send a rescuer who would save humanity, and in Jesus, He fulfilled that promise. Jesus’ very name, “Yahweh is salvation,” communicated His mission: to save people from their sins. This primary purpose of Jesus’ coming was not what many Jews expected of the Messiah. Many were anticipating that He would free Israel from their Roman oppressors and set up a physical kingdom as they had enjoyed during the time of King David and King Solomon. Instead, Jesus focused on the greatest need of all humans at all times—freedom from the sin that separates us from God.
- ◆ **Jesus is Immanuel.** In the Old Testament, God chose to dwell among His people in the tabernacle and the temple, but they could not come into His presence. God promised, one day, to provide a way that He could dwell with His people forever. As Immanuel, Jesus is “God with us”—the one who is the only way we can come to God (John 14:6).
- ◆ **God will fulfill all His promises.** The details surrounding Jesus’ birth remind us of the trustworthiness of God and His Word. Jesus was born to fulfill God’s promises and prophecy in

the Old Testament. God has fulfilled all His promises regarding the Messiah's birth, life, death and resurrection so we can be confident that He will keep all the promises He has yet to fulfill.

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### IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US

The gift of Christmas is the promise of God's presence.



### JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary to fulfill Old Testament prophecy and to affirm that He is the sinless Savior—God in the flesh who came to dwell with people and save us from our sin.



### LIFEWISE QUALITY

COMPASSION – Recognizing the suffering of others and taking action to help.



### HEAD

What did the angel tell Joseph to do about Mary?

What does the name *Immanuel* mean?





## HEART

Joseph faced a hard choice between doing what he thought was right and wanting to protect Mary. How did he show compassion before and after the angel spoke to him?

DO  
NOT

Immanuel means "God with us." How does Jesus coming to Earth and living a fully human life (one without sin) demonstrate God's compassion for us?

DISTRIBUTE



## HANDS

Suffering is a part of life, but it is easier to face when someone bears it with us. Think of someone who might be hurting or struggling with loneliness, physical illness or pain, a recent loss or another hard situation. Pray for them and write them a note or call them this week to encourage or offer to help them.

FOR  
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**HEAD**

**ALIVE WITH CHRIST**

The historical resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of the Christian faith.



**HEART**

**JESUS CONNECTION**

The resurrection of Jesus shows God's power and ability to change lives. Jesus' resurrection affirms the future resurrection of His people, the guarantee that God's kingdom will come fully to Earth and the certainty that death will one day be defeated forever.



**HANDS**

**LIFEWISE QUALITY**

**CONFIDENCE** – Full trust and assurance in the reliability of a person or thing.

**BIBLE REVIEW**

**MSSL 5 Previous Lesson Review | 1–2 Min**

[The previous lessons will vary depending on when Easter lessons begin each year. For today's review, use the review questions from the beginning of the lesson you will continue with after Easter.]

Today, we will read the Apostle Paul's testimony about Jesus' resurrection.

**SESSION STARTERS**

**Who's On Your Side? | 5–10 Min**

- ◆ Let's imagine that your school's best basketball player got injured the night before the state championship, so the coaches **decide** you will replace him or her, even though you've been a bench warmer all season. How confident would you be that the team could pull off a win? Why? What if, at the last minute, they got special permission to replace your player with LeBron James? Then how confident would you be that your team could win?
- ◆ Although we might place some confidence in skill level, natural abilities and determination, the reality is that if the right person is chosen to do something, we have great confidence that they will accomplish it. In today's story, we're going to learn why Jesus is exactly the right person to put our full confidence in.

**Easter Scavenger Hunt | 5–10 Min**

- ◆ Before class, write the following references on slips of paper and put them inside plastic eggs. Hide the eggs around your classroom or go outside if possible.
  - ◇ Matthew 28:8–10; 28:16–17
  - ◇ Mark 16:14
  - ◇ Luke 24:33–34; 24:36–43
  - ◇ John 20:14–18; 20:19–20; 20:26–28; 21:1
  - ◇ Acts 1:3; 1:21–22

Challenge the students to find the eggs. Once found, open them one at a time and have the students read the verses for the class.

- ♦ What do all of these verses have in common? (*They all record an eyewitness account of Jesus after the resurrection.*) The resurrection is the single most important event in human history, and we'll learn more about it in today's lesson.

## BIBLE LESSON: ALIVE WITH CHRIST | 10–20 Min

Paul wrote **1 Corinthians** as a letter to the church at **Corinth**. He addressed several ongoing sins and struggles in the church. Then, **he ended his letter by reminding them that the cure for all of their troubles is the gospel**. The word *gospel* simply means “good news.” **The Corinthians already believed the good news about Jesus, yet they needed a reminder that the gospel is essential to every area of life.** The gospel doesn't just give us a new life and a relationship with Christ, it also shapes our daily life in Him.

The church in Corinth was dealing with divisions in the church, sexual sins, bragging of all kinds, greed and idolatry. In other words, they were building their lives, hope and status on things other than the gospel of Jesus Christ. In his letter, **Paul corrected and rebuked them, reminded them of the good news and called them to live out what they said they believed.**

### 1 Corinthians 15:1–8.

Paul begins chapter 15 by laying out the gospel clearly because of all the things Paul had taught the Corinthians, the gospel was the most important (v. 3).

**God**, the eternal Creator of all things, **created us for a relationship with Him. Yet each of us has sinned against God** (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:23). **Because He is holy**—completely perfect and set apart from evil—our sin separates us from Him. **God's righteous character requires that sin be punished by death** (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1–3), **yet God loves us so much that He sent His Son into the world to save us from this punishment. Jesus**, wholly God and wholly man, **lived a sinless life, died on the cross in our place and rose from the grave so that we might have eternal life and joy** (Rom. 3:21–26; 1 Tim. 2:5–6).

Paul reminded the Corinthians what happened **when they chose to believe the gospel. They repented of their sin and believed they could only be reconciled to God**, or made right with Him **through Jesus' death and resurrection**. When they followed Jesus, **their sins were forgiven, and the Holy Spirit cleansed them so that they became brand new people on the inside** (2 Cor. 5:17). **They now had a restored relationship with God and** the guarantee that God's Spirit lived in them and that nothing could separate them from God's love (Rom. 8:38–39). They **would be with God for eternity**.

Quoting an early creed (a statement of shared belief), Paul summarized the gospel this way: **Christ died for our sins and was raised to life again, according to the Scriptures** (vs. 3–4). **And for Paul, the resurrection is the heart of the gospel.**

**The resurrection is not a fairy tale or myth; many people who witnessed Jesus' crucifixion saw Him again after He was raised to life.** On Sunday, the day Jesus was raised from death, he appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:14–18) and to a group of women, including Joanna (Luke 8:3, 24:10), Mary, mother of James and Joses (Matt. 27:56), and Salome (Mk. 16:1). He appeared to two disciples walking toward Emmaus and the disciple Peter (Lk. 24:13–35). Jesus also appeared to 10 of the disciples (Lk. 24:36–43; Jn. 20:19–23).

Paul declared that **Jesus proved that He was alive by appearing to many people over a period of 40 days (vs. 6–8)** including Peter, the 12 disciples, 500 followers of Jesus, the disciple James and finally to Paul himself. Many of these appearances are recorded in the Gospels. One week after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to all 11 disciples (Jn. 20:26–28), and He appeared to the disciples twice after that in Galilee (Matt. 28: 16–20; Lk. 24:50–52; Jn. 21).

### 1 Corinthians 15:9–11.

**Paul then used his own experiences to show the power of the resurrection.** Paul was not one of Jesus' disciples before His crucifixion. He was a Pharisee, a group of Jewish religious leaders who were partly responsible for Jesus' death. **When Paul first heard that Jesus rose from the dead,** he didn't believe it. In fact, **he persecuted those who believed the gospel.** He even oversaw the execution of at least one follower of Jesus, Stephen (Acts 7:57–8:1). **One day,** when Paul was going to Damascus to persecute the followers of Jesus there, **Jesus blinded Paul and appeared to him in a vision. Paul repented of his sin and chose to follow Jesus. The Holy Spirit completely changed him** from the inside out (Acts 9:1–22).

**As a Pharisee, Paul had tried to earn the approval of God** by keeping all of the rules of the Old Testament and Pharisees, **and he had excelled in this (Gal 1:14).** Yet he was blinded to his own hatred and inability to make himself right with God. **He was still a sinner desperately in need of the forgiveness Jesus offered. When Paul finally received God's grace,** he went from being a person who hated Jesus and His followers to openly sharing the gospel with everyone he met.

### Summarize 1 Corinthians 15:12–19.

Paul reminded the Corinthian believers that **belief in the physical resurrection of Jesus was essential to their faith. If God had not raised Jesus from the dead,** the followers of Jesus would have nothing. **They would still be under the power of sin, death and Satan.** They would be without hope or peace, eternally separated from God. It is only because of the resurrection that all of this is reversed.

### 1 Corinthians 15:20–22.

**Ultimately, it is the resurrection that proves the gospel is true. Paul compares Adam,** the first man God created, **to Jesus,** referring to Him as the second Adam. **Adam brought death through His disobedience to God** in eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, **while Jesus brought life through His perfect obedience to God the Father and His death and resurrection.**

**Just as Christ was raised from the dead, we will live again after we die.** Just as Christ was given a new body that will never decay or die, one day we will also be given bodies that will never sin, get sick or die (1 Cor. 15:50–58). The resurrection assures us that Jesus has the ultimate victory forever. **Because Jesus defeated death, we know that death doesn't have the final word over us. Because Jesus lives, we have hope that we too will live.**

### Big Ideas

- ♦ **Jesus gave clear and ample proof of His resurrection from the dead.** If anyone in Jesus' time was unsure of what to believe or wanted to investigate the evidence for the resurrection, there were more than enough eyewitness accounts to verify that the story of Jesus' death and resurrection was not made up. The eyewitnesses to Jesus' death and resurrection were still alive and openly testifying about what they had seen and heard (Lk. 23:22, 33–34; Jn 20:18, 24–25; 1 Cor. 15:5–8). We can confidently believe the resurrection is true because of these faithful eyewitnesses in the Bible.



- ◆ **Through His resurrection, Jesus accomplishes what no one else can.** No matter how hard he tried, Paul was lost and could not find the way to Heaven. Only Jesus was able to save him from the power of sin, Satan and death. We are also lost and without hope. We cannot earn or find salvation apart from the saving power that Jesus offers through His death and resurrection.
- ◆ **The gospel message is essential to spiritual change.** While we wait for Jesus' second coming, there will never be a point where we need spiritual truth beyond what the Bible offers. Instead, Paul calls us to learn and experience the power of the gospel in deeper ways as we allow God's Spirit to continually transform us to be more like Jesus.

## Discussion Questions

- ◆ Paul wrote the letter to the Corinthians about 20 years after Jesus' crucifixion and named several eyewitnesses who claimed to have seen Jesus alive. Why do you think this evidence is significant?
- ◆ What are some ways we try to earn God's approval instead of accepting Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf? Why aren't these ways sufficient to save us?
- ◆ Have you ever seen someone's life change after they chose to believe in Jesus' death and resurrection and to follow Him? What changes did you see?
- ◆ Why is Jesus' physical resurrection so important? Why would our faith be "worthless" (1 Cor. 15:17) if Jesus didn't rise from the dead?
- ◆ If God had the power to raise Jesus from death, then He also has the power to raise us from death. How can this fact encourage you as you think about your life today and in the future?

## REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

### Suggested Video | 5–10 Min

BibleProject Video: *Yakhal/Hope*; Full video: 4:10.

### A Resurrection Perspective | 5–10 Min

- ◆ Let's say you've had a difficult week, then one of your friends says, "But tomorrow is Friday!" How might that change your perspective? It's easy to focus on ourselves, our problems or the details of today and lose sight of all the good things we've been given or that we have to look forward to. But Jesus' resurrection changes everything! In Jesus, we have everything we need for every part of life (2 Pet. 1:3).
- ◆ In each of the situations below, how might remembering that Jesus rose from the dead change your perspective?
  - ◇ You have a big test coming up this week. You've been studying every night but are so worried about it that you can't sleep, BUT Jesus rose from the dead, so you can ...
  - ◇ There has been a bunch of drama at your lunch table, and you don't like it. You also don't want to sit by yourself or get made fun of, BUT Jesus rose from the dead, so you can ...
  - ◇ You are waiting to hear some big news about whether your dad is getting a new job. If he does, your family will have to move to a new town. BUT Jesus rose from the dead, so you will ...





## JESUS CONNECTION



The resurrection of Jesus shows God's power and ability to change lives. Jesus' resurrection affirms the future resurrection of His people, the guarantee that God's kingdom will come fully to Earth and the certainty that death will one day be defeated forever.



## LIFEWISE QUALITY | 3–5 Min

**CONFIDENCE** – Full trust and assurance in the reliability of a person or thing.

### Living LifeWise

Because Jesus physically rose from the dead, we can have the confidence to live God's way every day.

### LWQ Script

Paul was convinced that Jesus physically rose from the grave. He was convinced that the resurrection was critical for not just our salvation, but for our entire life. If God did raise Jesus from the dead, then He does have the power to keep every other promise He has made. And if He has the power to keep every promise, then there is nothing we will face or experience that God cannot handle. The resurrection is the firm foundation for our confidence and trust in God. It shows that He is fully reliable, so we can choose to live His way, every single day.

## Head, Heart, Hands Reinforcement | In-class or take-home

### ◆ Head Questions

- ◆ Read 1 Corinthians 15:3–8 again. Paul tells us the gospel message is of first importance. Fill in the blanks to finish this message below.

- That Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3)
- That He was \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Cor. 15:4)
- That He \_\_\_\_\_ on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:4)
- That He \_\_\_\_\_ to His disciples, many others and Paul (1 Cor. 15:5–8)

### ◆ Heart Questions

- ◆ How does the gospel (that Jesus died, was buried, rose again and appeared) give us confidence when we are uncertain or afraid?
- ◆ Many people are afraid to die or are uncertain about what comes after death. How does Jesus' life, death and resurrection give us the confidence to face death with hope?

### ♦ Hands Challenge

- ♦ The resurrection promises that God has the power to make us new and promises to one day make the world and all things new as well. For next week, create something new (a piece of art or invention) out of old materials (used cans, newspapers or magazines, bottle caps, whatever you can find). Bring it to the next class to display for your group.

## EXTENDED LESSON RESOURCES

### Bible Commentary for the Teacher

The power of Jesus' resurrection transforms those who believe the gospel and verifies the reason for their changed life.

- ♦ **We have a new spiritual life (1 Corinthians 15:1–3).** Once we repent and believe in Jesus' death and resurrection, we have a new reality, past, present and future.
  - ♦ **Our past reality:** We are sinners, justified, or given the right to stand before God, by grace.
  - ♦ **Our present reality:** God continues to make us more like Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us. God's Spirit reshapes our emotions, motivations, understanding of ourselves and identities.
  - ♦ **Our future reality:** The gospel proclaims the coming of a new kingdom, a new Heaven and Earth. Jesus promises us that one day He will destroy sin, Satan and death and give us new bodies like His. This promise of complete salvation provides believers with a hope that cannot be taken from them.
- ♦ **The gospel is the source of all spiritual transformation (1 Corinthians 15:12–19).** The entire message of the Bible hinges on the truth that Jesus rose from the dead. If Jesus did not rise, we are still left in our sin and death has the last word. The gospel is verified as we change to be more like Jesus. We grow in Christ not by moving past the gospel (as if it's a launchpad) but by moving deeper into all it means (as if it's an ocean).

### In Defense

"Did Jesus rise bodily, or was it just His spirit that arose? According to the Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus rose as a spirit creature. However, the evidence recorded during the 40 days after Jesus' resurrection says otherwise. For instance, the disciples initially thought that the risen Lord was a ghost, but Jesus corrected them by pointing out that He couldn't be a ghost "because a ghost does not have flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39). He even ate some fish to put the matter beyond all doubt (Luke 24:41–43). Thomas touched Jesus' hands and side to confirm that He had risen bodily (John 20:24–29). Paul even declared that the Christian faith is "in vain" if Christ did not bodily rise from death (1 Cor. 15:14). Why? The penalty for sins is death, and Jesus set out to take this penalty upon Himself and overturn it forever in His resurrection from death. This could not have been accomplished if His body remained dead in the tomb, suffering the consequences of sin's penalty."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sean McDowell, *CSB Apologetics Study Bible for Students*, B&H Publishing (Nashville, 2017), 1442.



#### ALIVE WITH CHRIST

The historical resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of the Christian faith.



#### JESUS CONNECTION

The resurrection of Jesus shows God's power and ability to change lives. Jesus' resurrection affirms the future resurrection of His people, the guarantee that God's kingdom will come fully to Earth, and the certainty that death will one day be defeated forever.



#### LIFEWISE QUALITY

CONFIDENCE – Full trust and assurance in the reliability of a person or thing.



#### HEAD

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 again. Paul tells us the gospel message is of first importance. Fill in the blanks to finish this message below.

- ◆ That Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3)
- ◆ That He was \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Cor. 15:4)
- ◆ That He \_\_\_\_\_ on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:4)
- ◆ That He \_\_\_\_\_ to His disciples, many others and Paul (1 Cor. 15:5-8)



## HEART

How does the gospel (that Jesus died, was buried, rose again and appeared) give us confidence when we are uncertain or afraid?

DO  
NOT

Many people are afraid to die or are uncertain about what comes after death. How does Jesus' life, death and resurrection give us confidence to face death with hope?

DISTRIBUTE



## HANDS

The promise of the resurrection is that God has the power to make us new and promises to one day make the world and all things new as well. For next week, create something new (a piece of art or invention) out of old materials (used cans, newspaper or magazines, bottle caps, whatever you can find). Bring it to the next class to display for your group.

FOR  
REVIEW  
ONLY



**HEAD**

### THE WORD MADE FLESH

Jesus is the living Word who came to reveal God to us.



**HEART**

### JESUS CONNECTION

The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, the one who came to reveal God perfectly to us and give eternal life to all who believe in Him.



**HANDS**

### LIFEWISE QUALITY

SACRIFICE – Giving of myself to help someone else.

## BIBLE REVIEW | 1–2 Min

[The previous lessons will vary depending on when Christmas lessons begin each year. For today's review, use the review questions from the beginning of the lesson you will continue with after Christmas.]

Today, we will learn about the true identity of Jesus from the Apostle John.

## SESSION STARTERS

### Wrapping a Gift | 5–10 Min

- ◆ Before class, gather two pairs of gloves or mittens, wrapping paper, tape and two small boxes. Pre-cut the paper so it can be used to wrap the boxes. In class, play a minute-to-win-it game. Challenge two volunteers to wrap the boxes, but they must do it while wearing the gloves or mittens (mittens are harder). Whoever gets more of the box wrapped (or whoever's gift looks best) wins the challenge.
- ◆ How many of you like to wrap presents? Do you think wrapping is an important part of the gift? God had a special gift for His people, and He chose to wrap it in a very special way. In today's story, we'll learn why it is so important that Jesus was born as a human baby.

### A Christmas Fable | 5–10 Min

- ◆ Share the following story with the class: There was once a man who chose to stay home from church one Christmas Eve. The thought of God becoming a man was, in his mind, impossible. So he sent his family to church but wanted nothing to do with it himself. As he sat in the quiet, he heard a thud against his window. When he went to investigate, he found a flock of birds outside, and one, in an attempt to escape the cold, had slammed against the window. The man wanted to help and decided to lead the birds into his barn, but every time he tried, the birds scattered, frightened by the strange man. He thought to himself, "If only I could be a bird and speak their language, I could show them the way into the barn." Just then, the church bells rang, and the man realized the wonder of Christmas.



- ✧ Have you, like the man in the story, ever tried to help a wild creature (or even another person) who didn't understand what you were doing? What happened?
- ✧ The story ends, "the man realized the wonder of Christmas." What do you think this phrase means? One of the most important parts of the Christmas story is the concept of the incarnation. That's a fancy word, but we will uncover what it means in today's lesson.

## BIBLE LESSON: THE WORD MADE FLESH | 10–20 Min

At Christmas, we celebrate the story of Jesus' birth, but the truth of His coming is much bigger than just a stable and a star. **Jesus is the God who became a man. We call it the *incarnation*, and the Bible summarizes it this way: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14).** In order to understand what happened, we need to look at two different perspectives of the same story—the birth of Jesus.

### John 1:1–5.

The **Apostle John** wrote the book of John to prove that **Jesus was the promised Messiah**. He began by revealing Jesus' identity as God. John called Jesus "the Word" to indicate both **His divine nature** and desire to reveal Himself to the world. John affirmed that **Jesus existed in the beginning, before the world was made, and was actively involved in creating all things**. Nothing in all creation was made without Him.

Instead of starting with Jesus' birth, John testified that **Jesus is the author of life and that His life brings light to men. Jesus' powerful light shines into the darkness both physically and spiritually**. In the beginning, He created the earth from a dark and formless void and brought physical light. When Jesus came to live among us, He brought spiritual light to a dark and sinful world that was separated from God and held captive by Satan. Jesus can open our eyes to the truth of the gospel, set us free from sin and bring us close to God the Father. Jesus is the light, and **He is so powerful that the darkness can never conquer Him. Instead, He conquers the darkness**.

### Luke 1:26–32.

In the book of Luke, Luke shares the second perspective of Jesus' incarnation—His humanity. **God chose a young girl named Mary and her fiancé, Joseph, to be Jesus' earthly parents**. They were both from the family line of David. **He sent the angel Gabriel to announce that Mary would be the mother of a very special baby. He would be the Son of God and the eternal King (Luke 1:32–33), and His name would be Immanuel (Matt. 1:23), meaning "God with us."**

### Summary of Luke 1:33–38; Luke 2:4–14.

**Mary asked the angel how this miraculous conception would happen** since she had never been with a man. **Gabriel explained that God's Spirit would cause Mary, though a virgin, to become pregnant, uniting Jesus' divine Spirit with a human body**. He affirmed that nothing was impossible for God, sharing that God had done another miracle. God had enabled Mary's older cousin, Elizabeth, to become pregnant with a child, although she was too old. Elizabeth's child, John, was sent ahead by God to prepare His people for Jesus (Luke 1:17).

**Mary believed Gabriel's good news. She humbly submitted to God's plan** and became pregnant as the angel had said. **She gave birth to the baby in Bethlehem and named Him Jesus**, as the angel had said. **God then sent many angels to nearby shepherds to announce the Messiah's birth**. The shepherds

joyfully shared what they had seen and heard along with Mary, Joseph and the whole town of Bethlehem:  
**The Savior had finally arrived!**

### John 1:14–15.

The mystery of the incarnation is that **when Jesus came to Earth as a baby, He did not cease to be God.** He continued to possess each divine quality. **He chose to limit His power and lay aside all the privileges and glory that were rightly His and take on human nature with all its limitations, lowering Himself to the form of a servant (Phil. 2:6–7). Wholly God and wholly man,** He lived among the people so that they might experience firsthand what God was like. Jesus spoke God's words and displayed a perfect picture of God for all to see.

**God sent Elizabeth's son, John the Baptist, ahead of His Son to testify that Jesus is the Messiah** (Jn. 1:15). John the Baptist's miraculous birth occurred less than a year before Jesus' physical birth (Lk. 1:5–17, 57–66). Yet, **John recognized that although he was physically born first, Jesus was alive long before John was ever created inside his mother.** John understood that Jesus "ranked" higher and was much more important than he was.

### John 1:16–18.

**Jesus' incarnation is necessary because it is the only way we can be made right with God. God gave His people the law through Moses to point them forward to the grace and truth of Jesus. The law revealed God's holy and perfect nature.** God cannot be near sin, and He calls His people to the same righteous standards. **The law also shows us that we could never live up to God's righteous requirements.** We fail continually, and there is nothing we can do to fix or change that fact. The law shows us how sinful we are.

**What the law could not provide, Jesus provided through His perfect life, death, resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:3–4). Jesus is God's greatest revelation of Himself to us and the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.** The entire Old Testament points to Jesus so we can find eternal life in Him.

### Big Ideas

- ◆ **Jesus is eternal.** He existed as part of the Trinity, along with God and the Holy Spirit, before the beginning of time and will continue to exist for all eternity. He created and holds all things together by His powerful Word (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3). As a human, He willingly died for our sins, but at His resurrection, His human nature remained and His physical body was restored and cannot die again. Through faith in Him, our limited, physical bodies will also be remade into resurrected bodies like His so we can live eternally with Him.
- ◆ **Jesus is God incarnate; wholly God and wholly man.** When Jesus came as a baby, He retained all the qualities that made Him God, yet He chose to submit to God by laying those attributes aside for a time. He also chose to take on all of the physical needs and limitations that make us human yet bore them perfectly. Without the incarnation of Christ, we would never be cleansed by Jesus' sacrifice and made new by the Spirit—we would never have eternal life.
- ◆ **Jesus is God's specific revelation to us.** God has shown us what He is like, indirectly through creation and the natural laws that govern the earth. Yet, when He sent Jesus, He sent the exact representation of Himself so that we would have a perfect understanding of what God the Father

is like (Heb. 1:2–3). Jesus told His disciples, “The one who has seen me has seen the Father” (Jn. 14:9).

### Discussion Questions

- ◆ Immanuel means, “God with us.” By taking on a human form, Jesus lived *as one of us*. Why was it necessary that God became one of us?
- ◆ What do you think it was like for Jesus to lay aside all His power and privileges and take the form of a baby?
- ◆ How is the character and nature of God visible in the life of Jesus?
- ◆ Jesus endured the cross because He knew there was joy to come (Heb. 12:2). When has your joy increased as you have focused more on giving to others instead of yourself?

### REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

#### Suggested Video | 5–10 Min

BibleProject Video: *Eternal Life*; Full video: 5:18.

#### Understanding the Incarnation | 5–10 Min

- ◆ Before class, mix oil and water in a water bottle and seal the lid in place. If desired, add food coloring to the water to make the separation easier to view. In class, demonstrate how you can shake up the bottle but the oil and water will separate every time. [Optional explanation: oil and water are immiscible, they cannot be mixed. Oil molecules stick together, and water molecules stick together, but they will not stick to each other.]
- ◆ The incarnation is a difficult concept to understand. Jesus is both divine and human, as well as God and man, but it’s not easy to explain. So, let’s explore what the incarnation is *not*.
  - ◇ Some people try to say Jesus is part God and part man, like my oil and water experiment. They say Jesus is half-God, half-man. But that’s not the idea of incarnation. It isn’t half of each ... it’s *all* of both.
  - ◇ Other people say that God put on a human disguise, that Jesus’ humanity was like a mask God put on over His deity. But does wearing a costume mean you turn into that person? Of course not. So a disguise isn’t the right way to explain it either.
- ◆ Simply put, the incarnation is what the Bible calls a *mystery*. It means we won’t ever fully understand how God did this, but somehow He did! Jesus is 100% God and 100% human, and because He is, He is our only hope of salvation.

### JESUS CONNECTION



The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, the one who came to reveal God perfectly to us and give eternal life to all who believe in Him.

## LIFEWISE QUALITY | 3–5 Min

**SACRIFICE** – Giving of myself to help someone else.

### Living LifeWise

Jesus chose to sacrifice for us, so we can choose to sacrifice for others.

### LWQ Script

We do not like to sacrifice. Our pride and sinful hearts want a comfortable and easy life. But Jesus modeled a different way. Jesus willingly limited His power and His eternal glory to take on a human nature and physical body. He left Heaven's perfect unity and lived a fully human life, complete with hard work, poverty and personal conflict. He chose to give His life as a sacrifice so that we could be saved.

In other religions, sacrifice is supposed to earn favor with a "god." But Jesus doesn't ask us to sacrifice to earn His love or goodwill. He has loved us from the beginning. Instead, He demonstrated His love for us through His sacrifice on the cross so that we have the opportunity to be made right with God. When we fully understand Jesus' love for us, His Spirit helps us willingly sacrifice for others so that others can experience sacrificial love and we can point them to Jesus.

### Head, Heart, Hands Reinforcement | In-class or take-home

- ◆ **Head Questions**
  - ◇ What right does God give to those who believe in Jesus?
  - ◇ What does it mean that grace and truth came through Jesus, compared to the law?
- ◆ **Heart Questions**
  - ◇ What did Jesus willingly sacrifice to "become flesh and dwell among us"? What makes someone willing to sacrifice for someone else?
  - ◇ When is it especially difficult for you to sacrifice for others? How might it help you to give of yourself, knowing that Jesus gave all and died for your sins?
- ◆ **Hands Challenge**
  - ◇ It is much harder to willingly sacrifice for the people we see every day and sometimes don't get along with. Choose one person you struggle to give of yourself to help (a sibling, classmate, neighbor, etc.). This week, pray and ask God to help you think of 2–3 ways you can sacrifice to help them and then do them willingly.

## EXTENDED LESSON RESOURCES

### Bible Commentary for the Teacher

The first chapter of John gives us a very clear picture of Jesus' identity.

- ◆ **Jesus was wholly God (John 1:1–3, 18)** When God sent Jesus to Earth, He voluntarily laid aside and limited His power and glory, submitting to God the Father's plan. Yet, Jesus still possessed every quality that made Him God. He was still an eternal, holy, omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (all-powerful), omnipresent (able to see all things at all times), sovereign, unchangeable being.
- ◆ **Jesus was wholly man (John 1:1, 14).** He was born as a baby and raised by Joseph and Mary, righteous but imperfect parents. In one sense, Jesus lived and worked as one of us. He grew up



with half brothers, went to school, did chores and learned the carpenter's trade. He knew sickness, hunger, thirst, frustration, grief, pain and joy. John and the other disciples knew and lived with the Word as a friend, who differed from them only in that He was the perfect Son of God.

- ◆ **Jesus' identity was clear (John 1:11).** The world should have recognized the one who created it. The first half of John's Gospel details how not only the unbelieving world, but even Israel—Jesus' own people—failed to recognize Him as the Messiah and Savior of the world. They rejected the light, including every demonstration of Jesus' divine nature and identity as Messiah (Jn. 12:37–43; Isa. 53:1).
- ◆ **Witnesses testified that Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:1–15, 29–34; Luke 3:21–22).**
  - ◇ The Apostle John wrote that Jesus was the pre-existing, eternal Son of God who became a man (Jn. 1:1–3, 14).
  - ◇ God told John the Baptist that His Spirit would descend on the Messiah like a dove in advance. When John witnessed the fulfillment of this promise as he baptized Jesus, John immediately testified that Jesus was the Son of God (Jn. 1:32–34).
  - ◇ God the Father spoke from Heaven confirming that Jesus was His Son (Luke 3:22).
  - ◇ The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, confirming His identity (Luke 3:21–22).
  - ◇ Even though the Apostle John, John the Baptist, God the Father and the Holy Spirit faithfully testified that Jesus was the Messiah, most people did not recognize His identity. Instead, Jesus was misunderstood and rejected by His own people. Yet, God promises that those who receive Jesus by accepting His true identity and trusting in His power to save them from sin will be welcomed into God's family as children of God. This spiritual adoption does not take place as a result of one's physical birth, race or human effort. It is a spiritual birth that happens through the power of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:4–8).

John also gives us a clear picture of Jesus' purpose in coming to Earth.

- ◆ **Jesus came to save us from sin (Matthew 1:21; 1 Corinthians 1:22–24).** The idea of the incarnate Son of God coming to Earth to sacrifice Himself was unthinkable to both the Jews and the Greeks. But for those who believe, it is the power and wisdom of God. This unfathomable miracle is the foundation of the Christian faith: the Son of God became human, dwelt with us and gave His life for ours.
- ◆ **Jesus raised us up from our lowly state (John 1:12–13; Eph. 2:6).** We who have received the good news about Jesus are now children of God. We are given this new identity as a gift because of Jesus' willingness to take the form of a servant by becoming a man. By doing this, He was able to raise us from sin, shame and darkness. We were children of wrath, but now we have become children of God. "By no means did He diminish His own nature by His condescension, but He raised us, who had always sat in disgrace and darkness, to unspeakable glory."<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ **Jesus brought grace and truth (John 1:3, 17; Hebrews 3:3).** Jesus, the eternal Son, was the creative agent through whom God created all the universe. In Hebrews 3:3, we see that Jesus is greater than Moses. Jesus is pictured as the builder of the house, while Moses was no more than a faithful caretaker in the house.

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<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Gospel of John 11.1, in John 1–10," vol. IV in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014), 40.



### In Defense

Jesus wasn't born just anywhere—He was born in “the city of David, which is called Bethlehem.” This fact was foretold by the prophet Micah 800 years earlier (Mic. 5:2). When the Roman empire required that all people travel to the towns of their ancestors, Joseph traveled with Mary approximately 90 miles from their hometown of Nazareth south to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1–3). Once Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, they found that “there was no guest room available for them.” Most people in Bethlehem lived in one-room homes, and the animal’s feeding troughs were typically in the family’s living area. Although the animals likely stayed outside, accommodations were made in the wall for an animal to stick his head in to eat from the trough. Larger homes had an adjoining room where guests could sleep. So, the young couple likely slept in the living area, and when Jesus was born, His first crib was an inglorious feeding trough.

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### THE WORD MADE FLESH

Jesus is the living word who came to reveal God to us.



### JESUS CONNECTION

The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, the one who came to reveal God perfectly to us and give eternal life to all who believe in Him.



### LIFEWISE QUALITY

SACRIFICE – Giving of myself to help someone else.



### HEAD

What right does God give to those who believe in Jesus?

What does it mean that grace and truth came through Jesus, compared to the law?



## HEART

What did Jesus willingly sacrifice to “become flesh and dwell among us”? What makes someone willing to sacrifice for someone else?

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When is it especially difficult for you to sacrifice for others? How might it help you to give of yourself, knowing that Jesus gave all and died for your sins?

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## HANDS

It is much harder to willingly sacrifice for the people we see everyday and sometimes don't get along with. Choose one person you struggle to give of yourself to help (a sibling, classmate, neighbor, etc.). This week, pray and ask God to help you think of 2–3 ways that you can sacrifice to help them and then do them willingly.

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HEAD

### FROM DESPAIR TO JOY

Jesus' resurrection turns our sorrow into joy.



HEART

### JESUS CONNECTION

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the cornerstone of the gospel, but also the source of joy and hope for all believers. Because Jesus died to pay the penalty of sin and rose again, we have good news to share with others.



HANDS

### LIFEWISE QUALITY

JOY – Having a cheerful response, regardless of my circumstances.

## BIBLE REVIEW | 1–2 Min

[The previous lessons will vary depending on when Easter lessons begin each year. For today's review, use the review questions from the beginning of the lesson you will continue with after Easter.]

Today, we will read the Apostle John's testimony about Jesus' resurrection.

## SESSION STARTERS

### Empty to Full | 5–10 Min

- ◆ Before class, fill two jars with jelly beans and gather empty cups, one for each color of jelly bean in the jars. Label the colors on the cups clearly. Choose two student volunteers to play the game: The first student to sort all the jelly beans from their jar into the empty cups by color wins.
- ◆ In today's game, some containers started full and others started empty. What are some things related to Easter that are empty? [Examples: plastic eggs, hollow chocolate bunnies, the tomb.] Today, we'll learn about a woman who thought the empty tomb was a big problem until she learned why it was empty. But once she understood what had happened, her heart became full. Full of faith. Full of joy. Full of purpose. Let's find out more.

### Pieces vs. Whole | 5–10 Min

- ◆ How many of you would like to have a piece of cake? What's your favorite kind of cake? Do you think you'd enjoy that same cake if you ate the ingredients separately—if you drank the oil, ate the egg raw or licked dry flour and baking soda? [If desired, bring in the ingredients or containers of the ingredients to show the students as you talk.]
- ◆ With a cake, the individual ingredients don't necessarily taste good on their own, but when we mix them we get something delicious. God can do the same thing with our lives. Not everything that happens to us feels good, but God is good and able to combine all those things into something for your good. At Easter, we celebrate the most powerful example of God turning what looked terrible into the most amazing victory.



## BIBLE LESSON: FROM DESPAIR TO JOY | 10–20 Min

### Summary of John 19:38–20:10.

Jesus was crucified on Friday. After the soldiers removed His body from the cross, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus laid Jesus in a new tomb within a garden near the place He was crucified. They wrapped Jesus' body in spices and white linen cloth, but could not complete the preparations for burial because of the approaching Sabbath day. Joseph rolled a large stone over the entrance to the tomb and left (Matt. 27:59–60).

Early Sunday morning, when the Sabbath was complete, some of the women who followed Jesus returned to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body. Mary Magdalene was with them (Mark 16:1). These women had seen Jesus suffer and die on the cross. Their hearts were heavy and confused about the events of the last few days. As they approached the tomb, they saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. Mary Magdalene left the other woman and ran to tell Peter and John, Jesus' disciples. She told the disciples that Jesus' body was gone, assuming that someone must have stolen it.

Peter and John ran to the tomb with Mary. They went into the tomb and saw that it was empty. The only thing left was the white burial cloths that Jesus' body had been wrapped in. The disciples believed Mary's report but did not understand what happened to Jesus.

### John 20:11–13.

Peter and John left, but Mary remained outside the tomb, weeping. She was discouraged and distraught over the events of the last three days. Not only had her Lord been brutally beaten and crucified, but His body was gone. In her grief and pain, she forgot Jesus' promises and missed how God was working. Jesus told His followers many times that He would die and rise again (Matt. 12:40, 16:21, 17:9, 20:17–19; Jn. 2:19).

God began to shift Mary's attention by sending two angels. They asked the reason she was crying, and she responded by saying that someone had taken Jesus' body away and she didn't know where it was. Mary did not yet realize that, with Jesus, death is never the outcome. Lost in her emotions, she still could not see the big picture.

### John 20:14–16.

Suddenly, Mary was shown the answer, but she still didn't recognize it. Jesus appeared, but Mary was so focused on finding Jesus' crucified body that she didn't notice His risen one until He said her name. In response, she cried out, "Rabboni," or, "my teacher." It was a title used by a teacher's closest followers, and it showed her willingness to hear, respond to and follow Him.<sup>1</sup>

When Jesus urged Mary not to cling to Him, He was referring to her deep emotional attachment. He was not concerned about physical touch and later allowed the disciples to touch His scars (Jn. 20:27). Instead, Jesus told Mary that He was only there temporarily and would soon return to God the Father in Heaven.<sup>2</sup> This joyful reunion was only the first step toward a greater joy, but one that would mean another, greater separation.

<sup>1</sup> Pratap C. Gine and Jacob Cherian, "John," in *South Asia Bible Commentary: A One-Volume Commentary on the Whole Bible*, ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Tamra Hernandez, "John," in *Study Bible for Women* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2014).

## John 20:17–18.

**Jesus appeared to Mary to open her eyes to the truth.** He had risen from death as He promised. **But He also** appeared to give Mary a mission. Jesus **commanded her to testify to the truth of His resurrection before the disciples.**

Mary went and reported that she had “seen the Lord!” **Encountering the resurrected Jesus made all the difference amid confusion, pain and brokenness. Mary’s joy replaced it all. She now saw that Jesus’ death was not the end, but the beginning of a new life.**

### Big Ideas

- ♦ **Jesus’ resurrection brings a new perspective.** Jesus’ followers grieved Jesus’ death so greatly that they nearly missed its significance. All of Jesus’ promises were wrapped up in both His death and His resurrection. The fulfillment of Jesus’ death should have led them to expect His resurrection, but their emotions, while understandable, blinded them to what was going on. Seeing Jesus alive opened their eyes and minds to accept God’s amazing plan.
- ♦ **Jesus’ resurrection brings hope.** In her sorrow, Mary could not see God’s plan unfolding. But suffering and death were not the outcome that day, and it is not the final word for us, either. When we go through difficult things or lose someone we love, we can lose sight of God’s promises. But Jesus’ resurrection has given us hope that one day His power will make everything new again. He will completely defeat sin, death and Satan. He will wipe away our tears, and there will be no more sickness, sadness or pain (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 20–21).
- ♦ **Jesus’ resurrection brings joy.** Jesus told Mary that He would not be able to stay with the disciples. Although this must have saddened her, nothing could overshadow her joy that Jesus was alive. Joy remained for Mary and all of Jesus’ followers even after Jesus returned to Heaven. When we remember that Jesus has already won the war over sin, Satan and death, we realize what this means for us. We can have great joy even amid the pain.

### Discussion Questions

- ♦ Jesus told His followers many times that He would die and rise again. Why do you think it took them so long to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead?
- ♦ Why do you think Mary failed to recognize Jesus right away when He appeared?
- ♦ Mary didn’t realize the truth of the resurrection all at once. She saw the empty tomb, then two angels and finally Jesus Himself—and she didn’t recognize Him immediately! How does it encourage you to know that God lovingly helps us overcome our doubt or fear one step at a time?
- ♦ Why did Jesus caution Mary not to cling to Him? What was He preparing her for?
- ♦ How do our emotions sometimes keep us from seeing a situation accurately? What are some ways that we can keep our feelings anchored to the truth?

## REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

### Suggested Video | 5–10 Min

BibleProject Video: *Chara/Joy*; Full video: 4:12.

### Ring the Bell | 5–10 Min

- ♦ Bring a handbell (or another type of bell) to class. Ask the class, “How does a bell work? How does it make a sound?” [*Answer: the clapper on the inside of the bell makes a sound when it hits the outer shell of the bell.*] So that’s how a bell works, but a bell doesn’t make sound all the time. What makes a bell produce a sound? (*Shaking it so the clapper moves.*)
- ♦ In life, we are sometimes going to be shaken up by situations. We might get big news (good or bad), face something hard or even celebrate something big. But like the bell, those outside forces don’t make the sound. They just cause the sound to be made by what’s already inside the bell. When Jesus rose from the dead, He defeated sin, Satan and death. So when we believe in Jesus, we have a joy inside us that can’t be destroyed by unexpected or harsh realities. Instead, when life shakes us up, we can ring out the joy we have in Jesus.
- ♦ Challenge the students to list some specific things Jesus accomplished for us through the resurrection. Write them on the whiteboard or have them journal as His accomplishments are mentioned. How do these truths help us live with joy?

### JESUS CONNECTION



The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the cornerstone of the gospel, but also the source of joy and hope for all believers. Because Jesus died to pay the penalty of sin and rose again, we have good news to share with others.

### LIFEWISE QUALITY | 3–5 Min

**JOY** – Having a cheerful response, regardless of my circumstances.

#### Living LifeWise

Because we know God works all things out for good, we can choose joy in overwhelming situations.

#### LWQ Script

The women and the disciples faced a tidal wave of emotions that Easter. From grief and despair, fear then joy; they were overwhelmed and unable to see how God was at work. Even when Jesus rose from the dead, when they saw Him, talked to Him and learned that all He had said would happen had come true, they continued to wrestle with the truth of the resurrection and all that it meant for them and us.

It is easy to lose sight of what we know to be true when we are facing overwhelming situations and emotions. Every person will struggle sometimes to align how they feel with the truth that God is completely in control and working all things out for good. But God has promised to work all things out for good, and the resurrection is the ultimate proof that He can do it. Because Jesus is alive forever, joy is possible in every situation.

## Head, Heart, Hands Reinforcement | In-class or take-home

- ◆ **Head Questions**
  - ◇ When Mary saw that Jesus' body was gone, what did she think happened?
  - ◇ How did Mary respond when she realized who Jesus was?
- ◆ **Heart Questions**
  - ◇ How can knowing that Jesus rose from the dead help us when we face hard situations?
  - ◇ Why does the power of Jesus' resurrection bring a joy that cannot be drowned when we suffer or struggle with anxiety, depression or anger?
- ◆ **Hands Challenge**
  - ◇ On hard days, it's easy to lose sight of what brings us joy. On a piece of paper (or card stock or construction paper) write out Psalm 16:11, "In your presence is abundant joy." Then, cut or print pictures of things that bring you joy and glue or tape them to your paper (or create an online collage if you have a device). Hang your collage where you can see it this week to remind you that God is the source of joy.

## EXTENDED LESSON RESOURCES

### Bible Commentary for the Teacher

Mary Magdalene struggled with grief in response to Jesus' crucifixion. John 20:11–15 shows God's response to those who struggle with pain and tragedy.

- ◆ **God allows us to grieve openly (John 20:11–15).** Mary Magdalene wept for Jesus. Not only because of His death, but because she was robbed of the opportunity to give Him a proper burial. This wasn't a sinful reaction, but a normal human response to tragedy. The Bible provides many other examples of how men and women of faith faced sorrow in a way that pleased God: Job (Job 2:12–13), Joseph, Daniel, Stephen and Paul all suffered, lost loved ones or faced sickness and death, yet trusted in God's promises and plan.
- ◆ **God comforts us through the presence of others (John 11–15).** Peter and John witnessed Jesus' death along with Mary. And she sought them out again to witness the perceived tragedy of Jesus' body being taken. After they left, God sent two angels to Mary. They didn't immediately seek to change her perspective; they simply asked why she was crying and listened. And Jesus Himself is our most faithful comforter. Jesus cried with another Mary after her brother Lazarus died, although He knew He would raise Lazarus to life. And He invites us to come to Him, "all of you who are weary and burdened" (Matt. 11:28). We can cast our cares upon Him because He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:17).
- ◆ **God calls us to look for how He might be working (John 20:16).** Mary could not see past the troubling events she had witnessed over the previous three days. Jesus called Mary to look up out of her grief to see what God was doing. When Mary responded, she saw from a whole different perspective.

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### FROM DESPAIR TO JOY

Jesus' resurrection turns our sorrow into joy.



### JESUS CONNECTION

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the cornerstone of the gospel, but also the source of joy and hope for all believers. Because Jesus died to pay the penalty of sin and rose again, we have good news to share with others.



### LIFEWISE QUALITY

JOY – Having a cheerful response, regardless of my circumstances.



### HEAD

When Mary saw that Jesus' body was gone, what did she think happened?

How did Mary respond when she realized who Jesus was?



## HEART

How can knowing that Jesus rose from the dead help us when we face hard situations?

Why does the power of Jesus' resurrection bring a joy that cannot be drowned when we suffer or struggle with anxiety, depression or anger?



## HANDS

On hard days, it's easy to lose sight of what brings us joy. On a piece of paper (or card stock or construction paper) write out Psalm 16:11, "In your presence is abundant joy." Then, cut or print pictures of things that bring you joy and glue or tape them to your paper (or create an online collage if you have a device). Hang your collage where you can see it this week to remind you that God is the source of joy.



**HEAD**

### **BIBLE REVIEW**

Year 1 – The Law and the Prophets  
Year 2 – The Life and Teachings of Jesus  
Year 3 – Living Out Jesus' Mission



**HEART**

### **JESUS CONNECTION**

Every story in the Bible points to Jesus' life, death and resurrection.



**HANDS**

### **LIFEWISE QUALITY**

**QUALITY** – Review of character qualities.

*This is a general review lesson that does not follow the regular MS lesson format. Instead, it is a list of activities that can be used for mid-year or end-of-year review for whatever lessons have been covered in that timeframe.*

## **REVIEW BIBLE STORIES AND LIFEWISE QUALITIES | 10–20 Min**

### **Bible Jeopardy**

- ◆ Before class, write five or six categories on individual papers, such as God, People, Places, Things, Prophets, Teachings of Jesus, LWQ's, etc. Write point values under each category on the paper or whiteboard that can be crossed off or erased. On a separate piece of paper, list the category and point values for answering specific questions in a category correctly. Write out questions for each category that are easy (worth 200 points), moderately challenging (worth 400 and 600 points) and difficult (800 and 1,000 points).
- ◆ Split the class into two or three teams. Students may choose the category and point value to answer. If the answer is correct, the team earns the amount of points listed. If incorrect, no negative points are earned and the question can be chosen again. Encourage students to use their Bibles to remember the answers needed. Students may answer as a small group or individually. For extra fun, secretly designate some "daily double" questions that are worth twice the listed amount of points.
- ◆ [Bible Jeopardy can be done via computer and put on your screen by using the program on [playfactile.com](http://playfactile.com) or [jeopardylabs.com](http://jeopardylabs.com).]

### **Crumple and Shoot**

- ◆ Prepare 10 to 20 questions. Cut 8.5x11 paper into fourths before class. Each group must have the same number of papers as the amount of questions. [Questions can be put into a slideshow or written on paper.]
- ◆ Divide the class into groups of 2–4 students. Place a trash can in the center of the classroom and put painter's tape on the floor where students should stand to shoot. A 1-point and 2-point line

can also be created. Ask all groups a question. Each group will write down the answer. If the answer is correct, they may crumple and shoot, getting a point for their team if they make a basket. If they answer incorrectly, the teacher takes their answer, and they don't get a turn to shoot.

- ♦ [More detailed instructions for this game at: [cultofpedagogy.com](http://cultofpedagogy.com).]

### Flyswatter Review

- ♦ Write at least 20 questions in advance. Write the answers (pictures are helpful for students who struggle to read) in large letters on sheets of paper and fasten them on the classroom wall with painter's tape or sticky tack.
- ♦ Divide the class into two or three teams. Each team must have one flyswatter. Ask the class a question. The student who swats the correct answer with their flyswatter first wins a point for their team.

### Bible Battleship

- ♦ List the main Bible stories and character qualities that you would like to review in a slideshow or on the whiteboard. Form groups of four students. Each group must create five Bible review questions that correspond to the list. The questions cannot have a yes or no answer. Each question should be written on a separate piece of paper.
- ♦ Begin the battle by picking one team. This team will throw their "bomb" (crumpled question) to another team. That team has 30 seconds to read, discuss and answer the question. If their answer is correct, it is their turn to throw a "bomb" on a team. If a team answers incorrectly, one of their two battleships is sunk. The game continues until only one team's battleship remains afloat.
- ♦ To make the game extra fun, print and laminate pictures of battleships or buy plastic boats from the dollar store and float them in a basin of water. Play a "sinking" sound effect on your computer whenever someone's ship sinks.

### Password

- ♦ Write a word, term, event or person on an index card. Then, write clues underneath the word on the same index card. [E.g., *The term "Noah" and clues "walked with God," "had three sons," "survived a flood."*] You should have at least 30 index cards (terms) for this game.
- ♦ Divide the class into two or three teams. Designate one student to give clues (this student can remain in this position the entire game or rotate with other students). The clue giver will be given the stack of index cards from the teacher. They will start with the first team and begin reading the clues until the team guesses the word or phrase correctly. The clue giver will then go to the next card and read clues. Each team gets 2 minutes and the team with the most correct guesses wins! Play as many rounds as possible.

### Heads Up

- ♦ Before class, write 30 separate terms to review on index cards. Divide the class into two or three teams. Team 1 goes first. Whoever is chosen from Team 1 stands in front of the room for their team to see. They will hold up an index card on their forehead so everyone can see the card but them. Team 1 will give clues to help their teammate to guess what is on the card. If the term is

guessed correctly, they will get another card to hold on their forehead. Each team gets two minutes, and then the play goes to the next team. A point can be awarded for each correct guess.

### Pass the Chicken

- ◆ Purchase a rubber chicken before class. Write out a list of review questions. Instruct students to sit in a circle. Have the students pass the chicken around the circle with their backs turned. When you turn around, whoever has the chicken will be in the hot seat. Ask them a review question while the chicken is passed around the circle. If the chicken arrives back to the student in the hot seat before they have answered the question, they must go into the “pot,” or the middle of the circle. Play continues. If another student doesn’t answer the question correctly, the student in the pot may answer. If they answer correctly, they can rejoin the circle. Play as time allows.

### Basketball

- ◆ Prepare a stack of index cards with questions. Purchase one to two durable basketball hoops (to hang on the door or wall) and mini basketballs, or use a trash can or bucket. Place them face-down on a desk or table.
- ◆ Divide the class into teams. One team gets to pick the question for another team. This team has 30 seconds to answer the question. If they answer correctly, they get 10 points. The team then chooses a shooter, who gets two shots at the basket for an extra 5 points. Alternate teams answering questions until time runs out, or a team reaches a set amount of points.

### Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?

- ◆ The questions are multiple-choice answers, beginning with easy questions and progressing to difficult questions. The more challenging the question, the greater the points awarded for the correct answer.
- ◆ [Use this free app to create a game with your own review questions for students: [superteachertools.us](https://superteachertools.us).]

### Around the World

- ◆ Create review questions in advance. Instruct students to sit in a circle. The first two students will compete against one another. Ask a question. Whoever gives you the answer first wins. The winner stands and moves to the next player in the circle.
- ◆ The goal is to move as many seats as possible before losing. Whenever the standing player answers incorrectly, they must sit in the seat of the person who answered correctly. It is now this player’s turn to travel around the circle. The goal is for one player to go “around the world” and return to their original seat. The student who travels the farthest wins.

### Sorry

- ◆ Prepare large colored cards with review questions. On the back of most of the cards, write a point value. On the back of two or three cards, write the word “sorry.” Place them on the board or wall.
- ◆ Assign the students to a team. Teams will take turns choosing whatever color or question they wish to answer. If the team gets the correct answer, they win the points on the back of the card. If the word “sorry” is written on the back of the card, the opposite team has their points wiped out.



## Who? What? Where?

- ◆ Prepare five mystery people, things and/or places, along with five hints for each word. Have students guess the mystery person, place and thing by giving them hints. A total of five hints will be given per subject. The sooner a team guesses, the more points they earn. The point system: correct guess on the first try: 5 points; second try: 4 points; third try: 3 points; fourth try: 2 points; fifth try: 1 point.

## Three In a Row

- ◆ Position seven chairs in a row. Form two or three teams and pass out colored paper for kids to hold: red for Team 1 and blue for Team 2. Begin by asking Team 1 a review question. Teams may discuss this before giving a final answer. If a team answers incorrectly, give the other team a chance to answer. For a correct answer, the team may either sit a player in an empty chair or choose a chair occupied by the other team (that player must return to his team). Teams will try to fill three seats in a row. If a team gets three players in a row, reset the game and continue until you ask all the review questions.

## Tic Tac Toe

- ◆ Write nine Bible review questions on large colored cards and hang them on the board or wall. Make 5 X's and 5 O's. Divide students into two teams. Teams may choose any question on the board to answer. If the team answers correctly, they will put their X or O over that question. To win, a team must get a tic tac toe by answering three questions in a row.
- ◆ [Several Google Slides presentations of this game are available on [teacherspayteachers.com](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com) for a small one-time fee.]

## STUDENT TAKEAWAYS | 5–15 Min

### One Thing

- ◆ Before class, take two papers and write “I learned” on one paper and “I need to” on the other paper. Stick them on a focal wall or whiteboard. Pass out two sticky notes to each student at the beginning of class. Ask the students to write down one important thing they learned about God or the Bible during class on the first sticky note. On the second note, have students write down one thing they believe God is calling them to do differently.
- ◆ Direct students to stick their notes up on the wall or whiteboard as soon as they finish. Spend a couple of minutes reading notes out loud and celebrating what students have learned and want to change.

### As You Like It

- ◆ List the character qualities discussed in class on the board or in a slide presentation. Have students pick three qualities and write down one way they would like others to show more of these qualities. Remind them of Jesus’ teaching of the “golden rule” (Matt. 7:12) and encourage them to ask God to help them do those things for others as well.

### Pick Three

- ◆ If you had to pick, which three qualities would you say are the most important? Do multiple categories as you have time. [Example categories: *easiest to apply, hardest to apply, most fun to do, most fun to receive, etc.*]

## STUDENT CHALLENGE | 1–2 Min

- ♦ Challenge students to continually learn more about God and the Bible through personal study, journaling and joining a church or youth group.
- ♦ Print and pass out growth bookmarks and a list of local churches for students to take home.

## PRAYER | 3–8 Min

Ask students to share one prayer request they have for the rest of the year/summer with their class or privately on a prayer request form. Spend time praying with students, inviting them to pray for one another. Pray Ephesians 3:14-19 over your students to end the class time together:

Ephesians 3:14-19 (CSB) – “I pray that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God’s love and to know Christ’s love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

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### BIBLE REVIEW

Year 1 – The Law and the Prophets



### JESUS CONNECTION

Every story in the Bible points to Jesus' life, death and resurrection.



### LIFEWISE QUALITY

Boldness	Courage	Joy	Perseverance	Self-Control
Compassion	Forgiveness	Kindness	Obedience	Submission
Commitment	Gratitude	Love	Respect	Teachable
Confidence	Hope	Mercy	Responsibility	Trustworthiness
Contentment	Humility	Patience	Sacrifice	Wholeheartedness



### HEAD

Write two things you learned about God during class this year:

1.

2.



## HEART

List 1-2 LifeWise qualities that you are doing your best to live out. How has God helped you to do this?

Which LifeWise quality do you most need God to develop within you?



## HANDS

Take time to pray and thank God for how He has been working in your heart and life this last year. Ask God to teach you how to become more like Jesus every day. Brainstorm 2-3 ways that you could take the initiative to develop the quality you need most.

## OUR PRAYER FOR YOU

In Ephesians 3:16-19, Paul says, "I pray that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through His Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."





### BIBLE REVIEW

Year 2 – The Life and Teachings of Jesus



### JESUS CONNECTION

Every story in the Bible points to Jesus' life, death and resurrection.



### LIFEWISE QUALITY

Availability	Fortitude	Kindness	Respect	Submission
Compassion	Gratitude	Love	Responsibility	Teachable
Confidence	Hope	Loyalty	Sacrifice	Truthfulness
Courage	Humility	Mercy	Self-Control	Wholeheartedness
Discernment	Joy	Persistence	Stewardship	Wisdom
Forgiveness				



### HEAD

Write two things you learned about God during class this year:

1.

2.



## HEART

List 1-2 LifeWise qualities that you are doing your best to live out. How has God helped you to do this?

Which LifeWise quality do you most need God to develop within you?



## HANDS

Take time to pray and thank God for how He has been working in your heart and life this last year. Ask God to teach you how to become more like Jesus every day. Brainstorm 2-3 ways that you could take the initiative to develop the quality you need most.

## OUR PRAYER FOR YOU

In Ephesians 3:16-19, Paul says, "I pray that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through His Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."



### BIBLE REVIEW

Year 3 – Living Out Jesus' Mission



### JESUS CONNECTION

Every story in the Bible points to Jesus' life, death and resurrection.



### LIFEWISE QUALITY

Availability	Contentment	Hope	Patience	Stewardship
Attentiveness	Cooperation	Humility	Perseverance	Submission
Acceptance	Courage	Initiative	Persistence	Teachable
Boldness	Discernment	Joy	Reliability	Truthfulness
Compassion	Forgiveness	Kindness	Responsibility	Wholeheartedness
Commitment	Generosity	Love	Sacrifice	
Confidence	Growth	Mercy	Self-Control	



### HEAD

Write two things you learned about God during class this year:

1.

2.



## HEART

List 1-2 LifeWise qualities that you are doing your best to live out. How has God helped you to do this?

Which LifeWise quality do you most need God to develop within you?



## HANDS

Take time to pray and thank God for how He has been working in your heart and life this last year. Ask God to teach you how to become more like Jesus every day. Brainstorm 2-3 ways that you could take the initiative to develop the quality you need most.

## OUR PRAYER FOR YOU

In Ephesians 3:16-19, Paul says, "I pray that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through His Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."