



He Is Risen!

Goal: To find joy in the surprises of Easter and share that joy with others.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Luke 24:1-12

They didn't expect it. Jesus' disciples and followers were heartbroken by his death on the cross. Now, just hours later, the women who came to Jesus' tomb were met by two men in "gleaming bright clothing" (v. 4, CEB) who delivered the astonishing news: "He isn't here, but has been raised" (v. 6, CEB).

This proclamation and its truth surprised all who heard it and shared it (vv. 6-8). That Jesus had risen from the dead was a message unlike anything else. It became the core foundation of the Christian faith. It reached the first followers with unexpected power!

That same surprise, joy, and wonder at Jesus' resurrection still come to us. Though we have heard the message proclaimed in churches, it can still affect our lives with amazing power. God's grace raised Jesus from the dead. He is alive, forever. He can be with us in our lives, forever. This makes us grateful beyond all imagining!

No wonder we share the Easter message. Jesus has defeated death; the victorious power of God's love and grace in Christ calls forth our praise and gratitude, forever.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children's concrete experiences of changes in the seasons can lay a foundation for their understanding of the Easter story. Trees lose their leaves in the fall, only to grow new ones in the spring. Plants that die down in the fall sprout and blossom in the spring. Baby animals are born in the spring. As children experience the cycles of nature, they can begin to grasp the cycle of life, death, and rebirth.

Each year, we tell the story of Easter with a new group of children who can hear it and imagine it through the lens of the women who came to the tomb, the women who were witnesses to Jesus' resurrection. Children can understand the experience of seeing something happen, of being a witness and then telling about what happened. As they tell about an incident, they become interpreters of that event.

In hearing this story again with children, we can be witnesses, saying with others, "He is risen." Moreover, we can be interpreters, sharing with others the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

The story for today concludes with wonder. Peter wondered what the empty tomb and risen Christ meant. He wondered what would happen next. Children's natural curiosity can be engaged with questions such as these or this one: Can you imagine what it must have been like to have been Mary, Joanna, or Mary Magdalene when they went to the empty tomb? Invite children to share their own wonderings and questions about this story.

*Holy God, thank you for the miracle of Easter.
Help me live out the joy of this day. Amen.*

Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 7, 25, 26

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

white candle

white cloth

blanket or sheet

blocks

small bowl

sweet-smelling natural
items; spices such as
cinnamon, nutmeg, and
so forth

Responding

Celebrating

small ball or soft object

Praying

copies of **Grace Notes (GN) 1**

Offering

copies of **GN 2**, plastic
Easter eggs, Easter
stickers

Extra

copies of **GN 3**, Bibles

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker on a clothespin. Use the schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Offering God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing **MS TD FA**

Play “Hallelujah!” as children arrive. Greet the children with the words “Christ is risen!” Prompt them to say, “He is risen indeed.”

Invite the children to prepare for Easter worship. Wonder what the group could add to the worship table to signify Easter. Ask them to include a Bible and a white cloth, the color for Easter. Place a white candle, representing the light of Christ, on the table.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Ask for two volunteers to practice reading the Scripture passage for today.

Invite the children to help you create a cave by spreading a blanket or sheet over chairs or a table. Leave one end open to create the entrance to the cave. You may need to anchor the blanket or sheet to help hold it in place. Wonder who has been in a cave and what it’s like in a cave. Explain that many years ago, people placed bodies in caves after a person died. They called the cave a tomb.

Invite a child or two to fill a small bowl with sweet-smelling natural items and spices such as flower petals, cinnamon sticks, cloves, or lemon, orange, or grapefruit peels.

T *Provide nonverbal and verbal cues before transitions. Using the visual schedule, point to it and note, “It’s three minutes until story time.”*

Singing **T**

Listen to “Hallelujah!”—**SCM 25**. Review the words and ask the children to sing along.

Praying

Turn on the candle on the worship table. Remind the children that the candles were extinguished throughout Lent. Explain that now a candle is lit to remind us that Jesus lives and is with us always. Pray:

Thank you for this day, O God. Thank you for Jesus, for his life and for his love. And thank you for . . . (*say group members’ names*). Let us feel your Spirit close to us. Help us show your love. Amen.

Preparing to Hear the Story T M L

Invite the children to tell you about Easter in their homes; they will be eager to do so. Find out who has visitors, who is going somewhere for Easter, and whether they hunt Easter eggs or find Easter baskets.

Ask a volunteer to retell what happened in last week’s story. Or remind the group that last week you talked about Holy Week, from Palm Sunday to Jesus’ crucifixion and death on Good Friday. Explain that while Jesus’ friends and family were sad about his death, this was not the end of the story. This week we hear the good news of Jesus living on—of his resurrection and eternal life with God. If the children attended any Holy Week services, invite them to talk about them.



If a child begins to cry from a recent loss, affirm that when we miss someone, it is good—and okay—to cry. God made our tears to help wash away some of our pain.

Hearing the Story M L

Invite a child to find Luke 24 in the Bible. Have two volunteers read Luke 24: 1–12. Conclude by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.” Place the open Bible on the worship table.

Invite the children to enter the story with their bodies. Gather near the cave/tomb and encourage children to act out the story as you read the story again from **SCM 7** or listen to the story audio. Pass around the bowl of sweet-smelling items and spices when you get to the part about the spices the women carried.

C Give children time to respond and to share; for some children, listening and speaking may take longer.

Reflecting on God’s Grace C

Invite children to share their thoughts and questions about today’s story. Be sensitive to children who may have experienced the death of a person or pet. Take time to listen to anything they may wish to share about their experience.

Recall that *grace* can mean “gift.” Wonder what gift God gives to the world through the Easter story. If the children don’t mention it, offer with conviction the gift of Jesus’ resurrection, which is a gracious gift and promised to all people through Jesus. Help the children understand that the resurrection means that good things can come out of bad, that new beginnings can come from endings, and so forth. For children, Jesus’ resurrection is about God’s love and power.

Singing M

Sing “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”—**SCM 26**. Encourage the children to move with the music.

Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Celebrating God's Grace

F A B SD

Recall that the women passed the word of Jesus' resurrection to the disciples, and many others since then have followed their example. Children can practice passing on the joyous word that Jesus is risen.

Stand in a circle and toss a small ball or other soft object to a child across from you. As you do, shout, "Christ is risen!" Instruct the child catching the object to shout, "He is risen indeed!" Cross your arms over your chest to show that you have had a turn. Continue until everyone has had a turn. Tell the children that those words are called the "Easter Acclamation" and are an ancient greeting that is still used in churches around the world today.

Play the game again, using a different Easter saying and response ("The tomb is empty!" with the response, "Come and see!" or "Go and tell!" with the response, "Jesus is raised from the dead!"). At the end of the game, ask each child to select one Easter greeting that she or he will say to others in church and to family members at home.

Praying God's Grace

TD

Invite the children to talk about how the women and the disciples felt when they realized Jesus was still with them. Encourage them to talk about the things that make them really happy, so happy they want to sing and shout and jump for joy. Today is a day more to express joy than to analyze it.

Provide watercolors and brushes and encourage the children to paint their joy.

If some children need a starting point, offer them the picture of the empty tomb on GN 1 and invite them to paint a joyful Easter sunrise. Talk with them as they paint about what they are painting, the colors they are choosing, or the things that make them feel joyful.

As they paint, wonder together how to make the world a more joyous place. This is a way the children can commit to living the grace and gratitude of resurrection. Ideas might include:

- ▼ Create a beautiful picture.
- ▼ Compliment someone.
- ▼ Sing a song.
- ▼ Write a joyful poem.
- ▼ Send a kind message to someone.
- ▼ Create joyful music.
- ▼ Let someone go ahead of you in line.
- ▼ Do a chore without being asked.
- ▼ Let someone know that you appreciate him or her.

Acclamation means loud and enthusiastic approval, typically to welcome or honor someone or something.

- ✎ Plant flowers.
- ✎ Thank someone for doing something that made you happy.
- ✎ Pick up litter.
- ✎ Give someone a hug.
- ✎ Tell someone about Jesus.

Challenge the children to choose one thing they can do in the coming week to help make the world a more joyous place.



Offering God's Grace

Help the children pass on the good news of Easter with good news eggs. Hand out copies of **GN 2** and ask for volunteers to read the Easter greetings on the strips. Encourage the children to color and decorate the strips. Have the children cut the strips apart. Give each child at least three plastic eggs. Provide Easter stickers for the children to decorate the eggs. Encourage the children to pass on the Easter message by giving the good news eggs to people they meet.

LD *A child with learning disabilities may be no less able than other children; they just receive, process, and/or respond differently. If writing or reading is difficult for a child, allow them to participate verbally.*

Extra Activity

C LD VI

Provide copies of **GN 3** and Bibles. Form four groups, assigning each group one of the Gospel accounts of the resurrection, or work together as a group to fill in the chart. Instruct the children to read the passages and answer the questions. If you have formed groups, give a time limit after which everyone will gather back together. Have each group report their findings.

Engage the children in conversation using the following questions.

- ✎ What was different about the passages?
- ✎ What was similar?
- ✎ Why do you think there are different accounts of the same event?
- ✎ What feeling or emotion comes through these stories?
- ✎ What feeling or emotion do you get?
- ✎ What would you want to tell others about Jesus' resurrection?



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

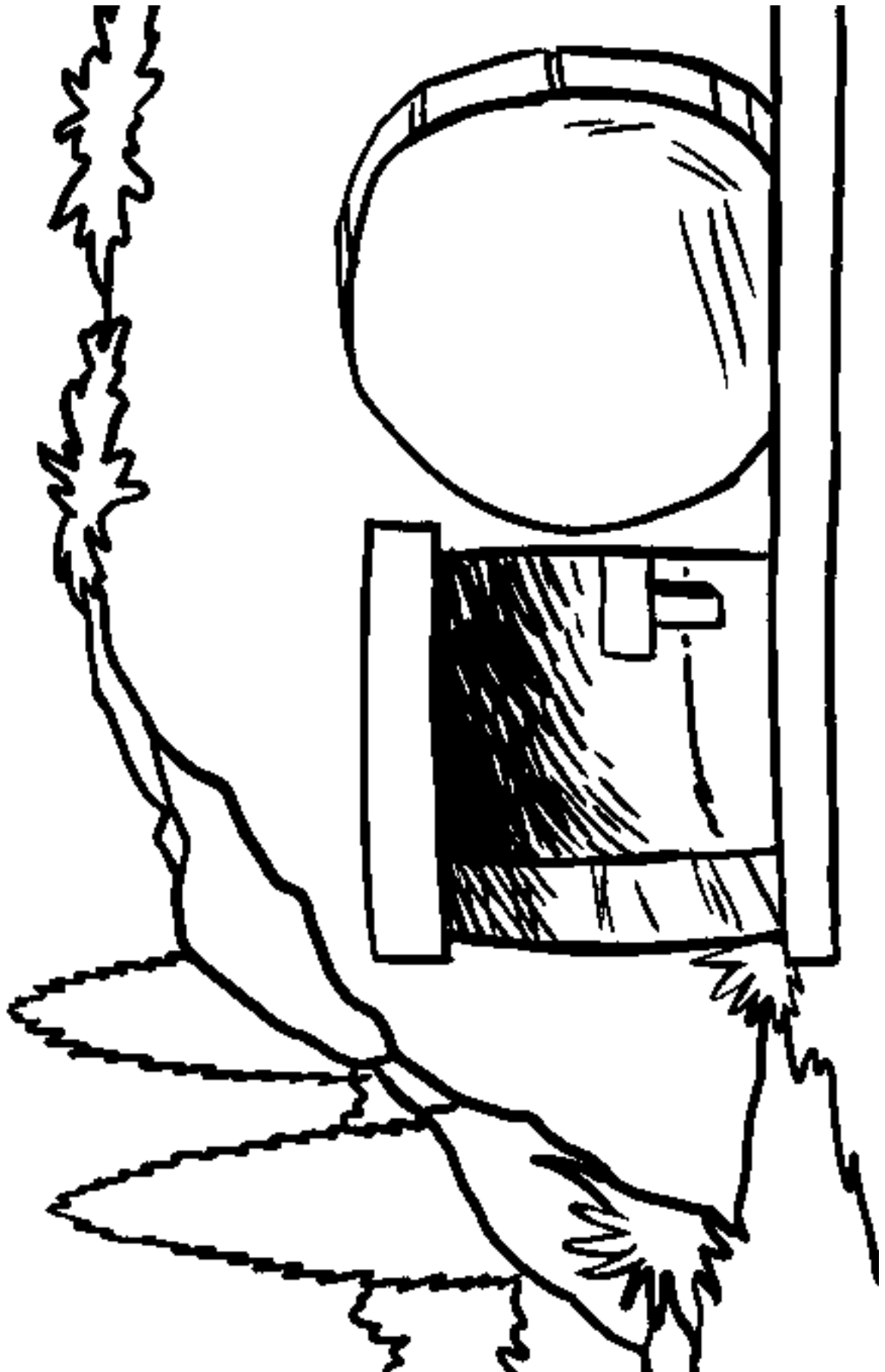
Invite the children to gather and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Sing “Hallelujah!”—**SCM 25**. This time around, invite the children to come up with movements for the song or to simply dance and move to express the joy of Easter.

Invite the children to join in a special farewell shout together to celebrate Easter. Tell children that when you say, “Christ is risen!” they are to respond loudly, “He is risen indeed!” Encourage children to respond with joy; end by saying, “Alleluia!”

Invite the children to think about things they can do to commit to living the grace and gratitude of resurrection.

As the children leave, bless each one: “(Name), go and share the good news: Jesus is alive! God’s grace be with you.”



Christ is risen!

Jesus is alive!

Celebrate new life!

Go and tell, Jesus is alive!

He is not here. Jesus has risen!



	Matthew 28:1-10	Mark 16:1-8	Luke 24:1-12	John 20:1-18
Who went to the tomb?				
Who was at the tomb when the visitor(s) arrived? What did they look like?				
How was the tomb opened?				
What was said to those visiting the tomb? Who said it?				
Who did the person(s) that went to the tomb tell about what they saw?				
What do you find surprising?				

