



TEACH IT COLLEGE AGE SESSION 12

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the Session 12 Scripture sheet
- the student journal page for Session 12
- his or her own Bible, a pen, and a notebook

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- a pack of colored pencils (at least two colors per student)
- optional: DVD of Discovery Channel's documentary, *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*
- optional: article about the lost tomb of Jesus, <http://benwitherington.blogspot.com/2007/02/jesus-tomb-titanic-talpiot-tomb-theory.html>

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 12

As students experience this session, they will—

- explore the details of Jesus' resurrection.
- be confronted with the reality and significance of the Resurrection.
- be challenged to personalize their belief in Jesus' resurrection.

PRAYER

Once the group has gathered, pray that the Lord will open your students' eyes to see life through the lens of Jesus' defeat of death.

OPEN

Defining the Defining Event

Help your students get their minds in gear by asking the following questions:

If you had to name one thing about Christianity that sets it apart from all other religions, what would it be?

Leave the discussion wide open, but conclude that Jesus' resurrection is the defining event of the Christian faith. No other faith has anything like it, and without it there would be no such thing as Christianity.



Why do you think it is that Christianity demands us to believe something so absurd from the world's perspective?

Elicit that belief in this absurd event demands another defining element of Christianity: faith. Remind them that Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith, it's impossible to please God. Doesn't it make sense that God would put something absurd at the core of Christianity, in order to activate the thing that pleases him most—faith?

3. Digging In

Resurrection Revelation

Have your group read John 20:1-18 using their Scripture sheets. Tell your students—

1. Look for the words **saw** and **looked**, along with any forms of these words. Using your colored pencils, mark these with a pair of eyes  or glasses  .
2. Really read the passage, and make sure you pick up on **who** is doing the seeing and **what** his or her response is.

While students are busy reading, draw the chart below (without the answers) on the whiteboard.

Then lead a discussion about the passage based on the “five Ws and the H” (*who, what, when, where, why, and how*). You’ll ask questions such as—*who was the first person to go to the tomb? What did she see? What was her response?* and so on. Keep pointing the group back to what they marked in Scripture, and record their observations on the whiteboard. Your board will look something like this:

Who saw?	What did he/she see?	How did he/she respond?
Mary Magdalene (v. 1)	-the stone had been taken away (v. 1) -two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been (v. 11-12) -Jesus (v. 14)	-She ran to Peter and the other disciple; she was sure someone had taken Jesus’ body (v. 2). -She stood outside the tomb crying (v. 11). -She cried out, “Rabboni!” (Teacher) (v. 16). -She went to the disciples with the news that she’d seen the Lord (v. 18).
Peter (v. 3)	-the strips of linen lying there (v. 6) -the burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head (v. 7) -the cloth folded by itself, separate from the linen (v. 7)	-He still didn’t understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead (v. 9). -He went home (v. 10).
The other disciple (v. 3)	the strips of linen lying there (v. 5)	-He believed (v. 8). -He still didn’t understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead (v. 9). -He went home (v. 10).

Once you’ve noted the main facts on the whiteboard, ask the students for their general impressions of this scene.

They may notice that the other disciple was faster than Peter or that the other disciple immediately believed when he saw the empty tomb, while there’s no record of Peter’s response.

4. Taking It Inward

Resurrection Refutation

Explain that over the years, many skeptics have put forth theories to discredit the Resurrection. As you share the three theories below, ask the students to refute them based on the info they’ve uncovered in their study of John 19 (Session 11) and 20. Ask students to share any other theories to which they’ve been exposed.

THEORY 1

Christ didn't actually die on the cross, but managed to escape and later appeared to the disciples.

You may need to remind your group of the crucifixion scene, which they studied in the previous session—or ask them to reread John 19:25-34. Some observations:

-Mary Magdalene witnessed the Crucifixion and showed up at the tomb.

-A Roman soldier confirmed that Jesus was dead; he even stabbed him to be sure. Had Jesus not actually died on the cross, it would have been tough to manage an escape in his wounded state (especially without help or anyone noticing). Plus, he would have had to recover fully by Sunday.

THEORY 2

The disciples stole Jesus' body (as the Jews claimed in Matthew 28:12-13) and concocted the post-Resurrection events recorded in Scripture.

Note that the entire testimony of Jesus' resurrection hinges on Mary Magdalene. Share that in those days, a woman's testimony wasn't considered valid. If you were trying to persuade people to believe a lie, you'd never have the validity of the facts rest on a woman's testimony. Also, if Jesus' body had been stolen, you wouldn't have seen a burial cloth folded up by itself! No thief would take the time to organize grave clothes. And if you concocted the story, why would you continue to ardently support the story when you were being persecuted, under the threat of death, for supporting that story?

THEORY 3

Mary Magdalene and the disciples went to the wrong tomb.

If they went to the wrong tomb, how would you explain the presence of grave clothes? How do you explain an angel manifestation? How do you explain Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus at the "wrong" tomb?

OPTION: TOMB OF JESUS' FAMILY FOUND?

You and your students may remember the publicity surrounding The Lost Tomb of Jesus, a documentary touting the discovery of a tomb containing ossuaries with inscriptions similar to the names of Jesus, his family, and others mentioned in the Gospels. Many biblical scholars have refuted the accuracy of the archeology and claims. You may want to read some information (here's a good article from Bible scholar Ben Witherington: <http://benwitherington.blogspot.com/2007/02/jesus-tomb-titanic-talpiot-tomb-theory.html>) and even schedule a time to watch the documentary. You can purchase a DVD of the documentary through the Discovery Channel's website, www.discovery.com

5. Digging Deeper and 6. Taking It Inward



Resurrection Proclamation/Resurrection Transformation

Share that it's no wonder skeptics would try to undermine Jesus' resurrection; it's the heart of the Christian faith. If you can explain away the Resurrection, you can explain away Christianity entirely—perhaps even the existence of God—and set up a worldview that allows you to live your own way, independently from God. Ask—

What about you? What difference does Jesus' resurrection make in your life? If Jesus' story stopped at the Crucifixion, what difference would that make in your life right now?

What do you think you would have done with faith and religion without Jesus' resurrection? Would you—

- follow the teachings of a man named Jesus?
- consider another religion? Which one?
- be an atheist or agnostic?

Explain to your students that they'll do the next two exercises (Digging Deeper and Taking It Inward) in solitude. Share that the purpose of these exercises is to help them experience Jesus' resurrection in a fresh way. Before they disperse, tell your students—

- 1. Find places where you can get alone with God. You'll be doing the Digging Deeper and Taking It Inward exercises printed on your journal pages.**
- 2. You'll need your Bibles, journal pages, and pens.**
- 3. During this solitude time, try to put yourself in the shoes of the very first readers of these Bible passages; read as if you're hearing this info for the first time.**

6. Wrapping It Up

Resurrection Action

After a few minutes, call the group together to share their experiences. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

Ask for volunteers to share their thoughts from the Taking It Inward exercise regarding how trust in Jesus' resurrection impacts the details of their lives.

What differences do you see between *then* (the time period when the New Testament was written) and *now* regarding the reality and importance of Jesus' resurrection?

It's been more than 2,000 years since Jesus' resurrection, and you've had a couple of decades to hear about Jesus' resurrection. That's just enough for it to start losing its meaning. What do you need to do to freshen the impact of Jesus' resurrection in your life?

After you ask the next question, give the students time to write a response on their journal pages before sharing with the group.

If the reality of Jesus' resurrection became as real to you as the clothes you're wearing now, how would the following areas of your life change?

- **personal Bible study**
- **prayer life**
- **thought life**
- **talking about Jesus with others**

OPTIONAL: To turn that last question into an opportunity for group sharing, invite students to sit in a circle. Ask them to circle one of the four areas that is least impacted by the reality of Jesus' resurrection—the area they would most like to improve. Then ask for volunteers to share which area they chose and why.

Before you close, ask for students to suggest a tangible object—that they can find at home—that would represent the area they circled.

Here are some suggestions:

-personal Bible study: a Bible

-prayer life: knee pads or a copy of Pray magazine

-thought life: a "brain game" such as Sudoku

-talking about Jesus with others: something that connotes "rescue," such as a piece of rope, a roll of LifeSavers candy, or a life ring from a pool

Invite them to take a picture of that item and e-mail it to you sometime this week with a note sharing how they'd like to improve in that area. As the leader, save those pictures to send a few days later as a "check in" on how they're doing with their improvements.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Since this is your final session in John, spend a few minutes helping your students reflect on their study experience using one or more of these options. Instruct your students—

- 1. Look over your marked-up Scripture sheets. Share a specific "Wow!" moment or express a truth that you never want to forget.**
- 2. Look over your journal pages and share a favorite session or meaningful exercise.**
- 3. Share your big takeaway from John. What's the one thing you'll never forget from this book, or the one change you've made as a result of this study?**

Close by asking a few volunteers to pray for the entire group—that the reality of Jesus' resurrection will work its way into every aspect of each student's life.