



## TEACH IT MIDDLE SCHOOL 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 one color per student)
- printed or projected pictures of famous tombs found online through an image search
- camera or camera phone
- a Bible, a picture or statue of praying hands, a “brain game” such as a Rubik’s Cube, and a microphone (See Wrapping It Up.)

### 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*

Before your group session, do a Web search for images of the gravesites of these famous people:

- William Shakespeare
- Benjamin Franklin
- George Washington
- President John F. Kennedy
- Princess Diana
- Muhammad
- King Tut
- Mahatma Gandhi

Project or hold up printed pictures of these gravesites. Ask if anyone has been to any of them. Then ask what they all have in common. Segue into the study by asking:

**What is different about these tombs of famous people and Jesus’ tomb?**

*Jesus’ tomb is empty. All of these other tombs have bodies in them.*

### Why is that important to Christians?

*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.

When students have finished reading, 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 question the Resurrection. As you share the three theories below, ask the students to give evidence to disprove these theories based on the info they've uncovered in their study of John 19 (Session 11) and 20.

#### 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?*

## 5. Digging Deeper and 6. Taking It Inward



### Resurrection Proclamation/Resurrection Transformation

Share that it's no wonder disbelievers 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?**

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.

If you'd like to shorten the Digging Deeper exercise, tell your students to skip the Acts passage and focus on the passages from Romans and 1 Corinthians. 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.**

## 7. Wrapping It Up

### *Resurrection Action*

After a few minutes, call the group together to share their experiences. Ask—

**When it comes to the reality and importance of Jesus' resurrection, what similarities do you see between *then* (the time period when the New Testament was written) and *now*?**

Have the students think for a minute about what would change in each of the following four areas of life if Jesus' resurrection were *real* to them. Then go around the group, and ask each student to pick up one of the four objects and hold it as he or she answers the question:

**What would change in this area of your life if Jesus' resurrection were *real* to you?**

- **personal Bible study: a Bible**
- **prayer life: a statue or picture of praying hands**
- **thought life: a “brain game” such as a Rubik's Cube or puzzle**
- **talking about Jesus with others: a microphone**

Close by having the students gather around the specific object they chose. Ask a volunteer to pray for each of the groups surrounding the objects—that the reality of Jesus' resurrection will work its way into that area and every aspect of each person's life.

Keep students around their specific objects for a minute and record who is around which object. Then take a digital picture (with a camera phone or camera) of the object and e-mail the picture to the students standing around that object. Instruct students to reply to that e-mail with a note sharing what they're doing in that area of life.

### **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?**