

## Interactive lesson



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-alive/>

Who is your favorite character in the Easter story?

Why? <Let them respond>

What do you make of {the others, one at a time}  
angels / Mary /other women / other disciples / Peter?

<Let them respond>

What do you think they did after the initial shock of  
the empty tomb that day? Why? <Let them respond>

What do you think Jesus thought about their response  
to His resurrection? Why? <Let them respond>

What do you think Jesus thinks about our response to  
His resurrection? Why? <Let them respond>

What do you think Jesus wants us to do now that we  
know about His resurrection? Why? <Let them respond>

May we always celebrate the resurrection of our Lord  
and proclaim the Good News to all whom we encounter  
that have a willing ear to listen.

## Gospel lesson

Let us listen now to the Easter story from:



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/we-are-witnesses/easter-sunday-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-c-graphics>

**Luke 24:1-12**

(NRSV)

<sup>1</sup> But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared.

<sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

<sup>3</sup> but when they went in, they did not find the body.

<sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them.

<sup>5</sup> The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.

<sup>6</sup> Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee,

<sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again."

<sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words,

<sup>9</sup> and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.

<sup>10</sup>Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles.

<sup>11</sup>But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

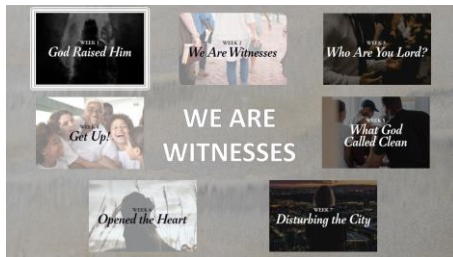
<sup>12</sup>But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn "Up from the Grave He Arose"

UMH #322>

## Message: God Raised Him



*pictures from*

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/we-are-witnesses>

Please pray with me?

Almighty God who proved Your power over death,  
as we take time now to further consider today's  
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may tell the world of Your amazing works.

Amen.

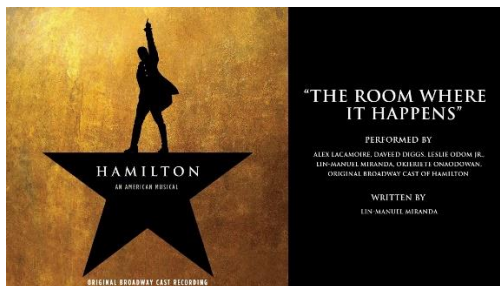
It's EASTER! Now “We Are Witnesses” as we take note that “God Raised Him.”



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/we-are-witnesses/easter-sunday-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-c-graphics>

“And everything changed in that moment. Moment? Event, perhaps. Everything changed with that event. Easter is a new start, a new creation. We didn’t go back to Eden, but the way to the kin-dom of God was opened on that day.”



picture from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrkwgEUXyTU>

Have any of you seen the show, “Hamilton”? In it, there is a song, “The Room Where It Happens.” Burr sings about how Madison, Jefferson, and Hamilton came to agreement on Hamilton’s setting up the US Treasury system in return for the US capital being down by Virginia instead of New York City. In the lyrics:

“Two Virginians and an immigrant walk into a room diametrically opposed - Foes

They emerge with a compromise, having opened doors that were previously closed - Bros”

He goes on to make a big deal about how he would have loved to have seen what actually happened in there, “But no one else was in the room where it happened.”

When I hear that on Easter, I think of Jesus’s tomb. How I would have loved to be in the room where it happened! To see Jesus arise, and later to have seen the faces of those who came to where He had lain!



*background picture from*  
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/boy-in-black-v-neck-shirt-with-looking-straight-to-the-camera-with-a-shocking-face-expression-764340/>

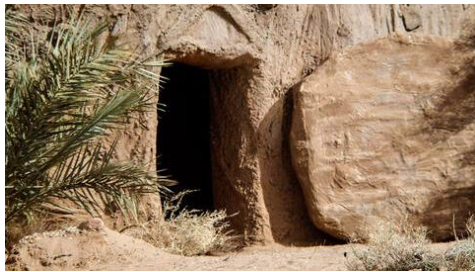
Have you ever witnessed an astonishing event? The unimaginable somehow coming to pass, and no one quite sure how those involved pulled it off?

We have little miracles happening every day – someone’s pulse brought back immediately after their heart stopped beating; people reconciling/reuniting after long periods of separation; maybe the government even does something that actually benefits society.

These are generally happy occurrences, for which we do not really understand everything that goes into them, yet we accept them as feasible. When something amazing and unrepeatable happens, like an incredible sports play, we stand in awe, and perhaps chalk it up to luck as much as anything.

But in today's science-oriented world, do we see anything happening that cannot be described by science, that can only be ascribed to the power of God, beyond anything experienced before? Would you believe it to be real if it happened?

For that matter, is there anyone who could tell you about it that you would believe, or would you have to see the evidence for yourself? Who could you tell about it, that would believe you? How much convincing would it take?



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-alive/>

How do you think the followers of Jesus felt when they showed up to the tomb, and it was empty? Everybody knew the dead stay dead – except for when the mighty prophets Elijah or Elisha brought someone back, and when Jesus raised Lazarus. But there was no mighty prophet to raise Jesus.

*<Share picture from Mike Sheridan>*

In that first moment of finding the empty tomb, they did not remember that Jesus had said He would die and then be alive again in three days. The angels

reminded the women, and so the women tried to pass along word of the resurrection to the disciples.

How well do men listen to women? How well did those men listen to those women? The mother of James tried to tell her own son the Good News, but it was take as “idle words.” Peter ran to the tomb to check out the news for himself, and came away amazed.

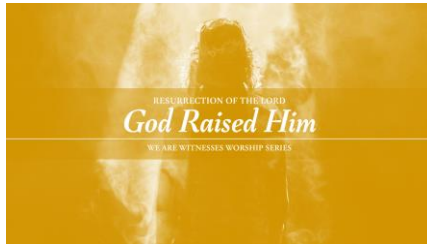
If we heard something like that today, we would probably want to check it out for ourselves too; we might google it to look up the news details, just to get bombarded with conflicting viewpoints and arguments about what it meant for various factions.

We are immersed in a sin-filled world and do not even realize how much we assume about the status quo. God calls us to so much better! “The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.”

The first apostles went all over the countryside to spread the news. They were not formally educated and eloquent, but they were willing and went personally to tell about what they had seen and heard. They connected with others to share the love of Christ.

Saul, persecutor of the early church, was the last person the apostles thought would tell about Jesus, but as Paul he too went all over to tell people (in person) about the Good News. He also wrote to them,

and his letters continue to reach people's hearts today.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/we-are-witnesses/easter-sunday-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-c-graphics>

God raises each person willing to do God's work into far more than we envision or expect. Jesus showed us better than anyone how to live and love in the Lord.

This Easter, let us celebrate that God raised Him! Do not hesitate to let others know why you are celebrating; invite them to the party! . Jesus is risen from the dead, Alleluia!

Yet as we know we hesitate when we are called to action in God's love, let us pray together this:

*<PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Karen Pidcock-Lester, in The Abingdon Women's Preaching Annual, Series 2, Year A, compiled and edited by Lenora Tubbs Tisdale, (Abingdon, 2000), 102-103.)>*

**Holy, Holy, Holy God,**

as we draw near to the mouth of the tomb  
and find the stone rolled away,  
as we bend with racing hearts to look inside,  
we are struck dumb.

All our words are as prattle

before the awe and majesty of your power.

In silence, we bow before you, for we have fallen short of the glory for which you created us.



**Lord, have mercy upon us, and make us worthy to be called your own. Amen.**

*<PARDON (Karen Pidcock-Lester, in The Abingdon Women's Preaching Annual, Series 2, Year A, compiled and edited by Lenora Tubbs Tisdale, (Abingdon, 2000), 102-103.)>*

In the empty tomb, God declares that  
nothing can separate us from the love of God;  
nothing we have done, or left undone;  
no one whom we have been or failed to be.  
Nothing can separate us from the love of God  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Friends, believe the good news:  
in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

**Alleluia! Amen.**

*<Doxology>*

*<Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>*

Let us pray:

Mighty God of Resurrection Power: You offer us life  
that overcomes death, light that overcomes darkness,  
hope that overcomes our deepest despair!

What response could we offer? Our tithes and gifts,  
yes; but our minds, hearts, bodies, and witness as  
well.

Guide our minds toward understanding who you are and  
who you long for us to be in this world.

Fill our hearts to overflowing with your love and compassion for the poor, the oppressed, and the forgotten.

Stir up our bodies, carrying us out of the tombs of isolation to engage our neighbors as sisters and brothers.

Compel our witness of the “Alleluias!” we take with us to bring hope to everyone we meet!

In the Risen Christ, we pray.

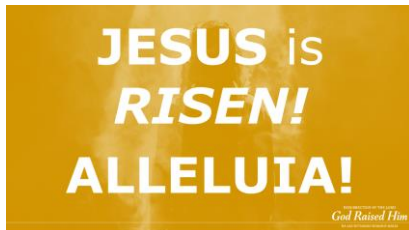
- Lord, please help {these members of the body of Christ whom we lift up} with Your healing touch and comfort:
  - -
  - -
  - -
  - -
  - -
  - -
  - -
- Thanks for
  - -
  - -
- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
  - Family far off
  - Travelers
- Lord, please help the people of Ukraine who wander displaced from their homes due to the war.

- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
  - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
  - bring world peace
- Guide our Leaders – local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.

All these things we pray as You taught us to pray:  
<Lord's Prayer>

<Hymn "Thine Be the Glory" UMH #308>

<Benediction (from reWorship, <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/03/benediction-witnesses.html>)>



background picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/we-are-witnesses/easter-sunday-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-c-graphics>, recolored

Go from here as witnesses of what you have seen and heard.

Share God's love with those you meet.

Bring hope to those who are in despair.

Live lives of gratitude and praise.

And may the love of God,

the peace of Jesus Christ,

and the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit

be within you and among you until we meet again.

Amen.