

# The Empty Tomb

## Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference  
**Matthew 28:1-10**

Lectionary Sunday/  
Church Season  
**Easter Day**

Lesson Focus  
**Jesus surprises us!**



### Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<p><b>Arrival Time</b> Kids guess what's in three wrapped presents and do an Activity Page.</p>	<p>Activity Pages </p>	<p>Markers, pencils, whiteboard, dry-erase marker, boxes, wrapping paper, ribbon, tape, scissors, pair of sandals, crepe paper streamers</p>
<p><b>Circle Time</b> Kids greet each other with a class cheer, hear about the lectionary season, and try to figure out how emptiness can be good news.</p>	<p>Leaflet</p>	<p>Box #1 from Arrival Time, guesses on the whiteboard from Arrival Time</p>
<p><b>Prayer Time</b> Kids pray an echo prayer.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Box #1 from Arrival Time</p>

### Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<p><b>The Empty Tomb Storytelling</b> Leader or kid reads aloud from the Spark Story Bible and kids find out what is in box #2.</p>	<p>Spark Story Bibles</p>	<p>Box #2 from Arrival Time, guesses on the whiteboard from Arrival Time</p>
<p><b>Jesus Is Alive!</b> Kids sing a song about Mary's surprise in the garden.</p>	<p>Leaflets, Lesson Stickers</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Surprise!</b> Kids draw what their faces would look like and write what they would say if they saw Jesus in the garden.</p>	<p>Leaflets</p>	<p>Pencils, markers</p>

## Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<p><b>Go and Tell!</b> Kids complete a puzzle to find the good-news message.</p>	Leaflets	Pencils
<p><b>Tombs in Jesus' Time</b> Kids learn about tombs from New Testament times.</p>	Leaflets	None
<p><b>The Empty Egg Game</b> Kids try to find the empty Easter egg that represents the empty tomb.</p>	None	Empty egg cartons, plastic Easter eggs, jelly beans, bowls

## Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<p><b>Good-bye Time</b> Kids select what they will do at home this week, say the lesson focus statement, do a good-bye action rhyme, and open box #3 from Arrival Time.</p>	Leaflets	Pencils, scissors, box #3 from Arrival Time, guesses on the whiteboard from Arrival Time
<p><b>Prayer Time</b> Kids do a cheer to celebrate the good news of Easter.</p>	Leaflets, Family Pages 	None



Looking for additional Spark content to further engage kids? Visit [wearesparkhouse.org/kids/SHOSS](http://wearesparkhouse.org/kids/SHOSS) to learn more about these options for purchase.

- The Director's CD-Rom contains Activity Pages, Coloring Pages, Family Pages, Large Group Openings, and two additional in-class activities for each lesson.
- A Spark Online annual subscription gives you access to all content contained in the Director's CD-Rom and the Spark Leader Guides, plus administrative tools and other extras.

# Gather (10 minutes)

## Arrival Time

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Set out markers, pencils, and copies of the Activity Page for this lesson.

Prepare the three gift boxes. The first box, box #1, is empty. The second box, box #2, contains a pair of sandals. The third box, box #3, contains one 30 inch (77 cm) length of colorful streamer for each kid. Wrap the three boxes with wrapping paper and ribbon and clearly label each appropriately with a 1, 2, or 3.

**We have lots of guessing to do today! I have three wrapped boxes. Inside each box is something special. You may look at the gifts and carefully shake them. Then make your best guess about what is inside of each box. I'm going to write your guesses on the board.** While the kids are examining the boxes, draw three large boxes on the board. Draw a big gift tag to each box, numbered 1, 2, and 3.  
**Who has a guess about what's in box #1?** Write responses inside the outline of box #1 on the whiteboard. As kids make guesses, say comments such as, **Hmmm. That's a good guess. I wonder if you're right.**

**Box #2 is a little bit heavier than box #1. What could be in box #2?** Write down kids' responses inside the box #2 outline on the board.

**Did you shake box #3? It makes an interesting sound. Can someone shake box #3 gently for us, and we'll listen carefully?** Choose a volunteer to shake box #3.  
**Did you hear it? I wonder what's inside of box #3. Tell me your best guess.** Write down responses inside box #3 on the board.

Invite kids to do the Activity Page. When all kids have arrived, invite them to join you in a circle or small group.

## Circle Time

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**Let's all stand in a circle and put one hand in the middle, so our hands stack on top of each other.** Place your hand in first to demonstrate. After everyone has a hand in the circle, shout together, **God loves everyone! God knows our names! Now, we'll each shout our own name out loud and lift up our hand starting with the person whose hand is on top.** Kids take turns saying their names, in the order their hands are stacked from top to bottom. After all names are said, tell everyone, **Raise both of your hands high and shout, "Praise God!"**

If the kids in your class tried the Faith on the Go! activities from last week's leaflet, be sure to invite kids to share what they did. Ask everyone how they showed love to someone or helped another person during the last week.

Hold up the leaflet, and point to the cross on the white background. **If you look very closely at the symbol on the leaflet, you can see that it is made up of three**

### Spark Resources

Activity Pages



### Supplies

Markers

Pencils

Whiteboard

Dry-erase marker

3 Boxes

Wrapping paper

Ribbon

Tape

Scissors

Pair of sandals that can fit in one of the boxes

30 inch (77 cm) lengths of colorful streamers, one for each kid.

### Spark Resources

Leaflet

### Supplies

Box #1 from Arrival Time

Guesses on the whiteboard from Arrival Time

**Easter pictures. Which ones do you see? (egg, cross) The egg inside the square shape also looks like the opening of a tomb! Today is a very special day in the church—Easter! Today we remember that Jesus is alive. Jesus rose from the dead and got a new name. Now we call him Jesus Christ. We believe in Jesus Christ, so we are called Christians. On Easter, Jesus surprised us with God’s love.**

**Today’s Bible story is full of good news because Easter is such a special day. There’s a clue about today’s story in box #1. Let’s read the guesses you made about what is in box #1. Read the guesses aloud and unwrap the box. It’s empty? How could finding nothing be good news? Emptiness was a great surprise in today’s story. I wonder what happened!**

## Prayer Time

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**Let’s all stand in a circle around the empty box. Open your hands with your palms up, like this, to show that your palms are empty.** Demonstrate how to hold hands palms up in a gesture of emptiness. **Now repeat each line of the prayer after me.**

**Loving God,  
You made each one of us.  
You filled each one of us with your love.  
Now fill our empty hands with good news,  
Good news to share with others  
As we go on our way today!  
Amen.**

Spark Resources  
None

Supplies  
Box #1 from Arrival Time

## Open the Bible (15 minutes)

### The Empty Tomb Storytelling

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**Today’s Bible story is called The Empty Tomb. Hmmm. There’s that word: empty. What was inside box #1? (nothing) Box #1 was empty. How would you feel if you got a birthday present, and you opened it and it was empty?** Affirm responses. **Lots of times the word “empty” makes us feel sad and disappointed, like when we’re drinking our favorite drink and then it’s all gone. Our glass is empty. But in today’s Bible story the word “empty” makes us very, very happy. What a surprise!**

Pass out the Spark Story Bibles and invite everyone to find The Empty Tomb on pages 482–487. Wait until all kids have found the story, assisting those who may need help.

**It’s time to open another box, box #2.** Read aloud the kids’ guesses for box #2,

Spark Resources  
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies  
Box #2 from Arrival Time  
Guesses on the whiteboard  
from Arrival Time

and unwrap the box. Hold up the sandals. **Show me where we wear sandals.** (*on our feet*) **Listen for the word "feet" in our story. When you hear it, tap your feet.**

Encourage kids to follow along as you read The Empty Tomb or ask for a volunteer to read aloud. **Jesus surprises us in lots of ways. How did Jesus surprise the women with emptiness?** (*Jesus' tomb was empty when the women arrived.*) **How did Jesus surprise Mary with his feet?** (*She tripped, fell down, saw his feet, and knew they belonged to Jesus.*) **What was the biggest surprise of all?** (*The women thought that Jesus was dead, but Jesus was alive!*)

Have a brief conversation about the story. Ask the kids these questions:

1. **Why were the women going to Jesus' tomb?** (*They had a job to do; they were going to rub spices on Jesus' dead body.*)
2. **What new job did the angel give the women to do?** (*The angel told them to tell the disciples that Jesus was alive.*)
3. **Tell about a time when you were very sad and then very happy.** Affirm all responses.

## Jesus Is Alive!

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If kids are not already seated at a table, move to one for this activity. Give each kid a leaflet.

**Look at the Bible story picture on the first page. Who is the woman in the picture?** (*Mary*) **How does Mary feel?** (*We don't know because her mouth is missing.*) **Let's add our big sticker so we can find out how Mary is feeling.** Hand out large stickers to kids. Pause to give kids time to place their large sticker. **How does Mary feel?** (*happy*) **Why is she happy?** (*She knows that those feet belong to Jesus, and Jesus is alive!*) **What a surprise!**

**Mary bumped into a man, tripped, and fell at his feet. She knew those feet. A familiar hand reached out to help her. Wait! She knew that hand. She looked up. Yes, she knew that smile. It was Jesus! Here's a song about Mary finding Jesus. Let's sing it to the tune of "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes." Follow my words and actions!** You may choose to chant or rap the words instead.

**Toes, knees, and shoulders and head;** (Touch each body part as you name it.)

**Shoulders and head.** (Touch shoulders and head.)

**Mary heard what Jesus said.** (Touch ears and mouth.)

**Jesus said,** (Touch mouth.)

**"I am alive!** (Jump up with arms lifted high.)

**I'm no longer dead!"** (Jump up again.)

**Toes, knees, and shoulders and head;** (Touch each body part as you name it.)

**Shoulders and head.** (Touch shoulders and head.)

**Toes, knees, and shoulders and head;** (Touch each body part as you name it.)

### Spark Resources

Leaflets  
Lesson Stickers

### Supplies

None

**Shoulders and head.** (Touch shoulders and head.)

**"Tell the good news!" Jesus said.** (Cup hands around mouth.)

**Jesus said,** (Touch mouth.)

**"I am alive!** (Jump up with arms lifted high.)

**I'm no longer dead!"** (Jump up again.)

**Toes, knees, and shoulders and head;** (Touch each body part as you name it.)

**Shoulders and head.** (Touch shoulders and head.)

**Let's look at the bottom of this page and read about where we can find this story in the Bible. Today's Bible story, The Empty Tomb, is from the Gospel of Matthew. Gospel books tell us about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The word *gospel* means good news. On Easter we celebrate the good news that Jesus is alive!**

Hand out the three word stickers to kids. **Now look at the bottom of the third page in your leaflet. It has the same words that we just read, but it's missing some important words. Use the word stickers to fill in the blanks. Which word do you think goes where?** (*Empty, good news, alive*) After attaching the stickers, read the statements together.

If you are interested in teaching your kids a Bible Memory Verse from this story, use this one. Teach it to them by inviting them to echo what you say, one phrase at a time.

**So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Matthew 28:8**

## Surprise!

Invite kids to open to the second page of their leaflets. **When the women arrived at the tomb, Jesus was gone! When Mary looked up in the garden, Jesus was there! Jesus surprises us with love and joy.**

**Show me what your face would look like if Jesus surprised you in the garden.** Pause to give kids time to make surprised expressions. **Now, raise your left hand. Place it on the left side of your leaflet page. Who is this?** (*Jesus*) **Imagine that you are standing right next to Jesus, when you discovered that he was alive. In the head and shoulders outline, draw what your face would look like.** Give kids time to draw and to show their drawings to each other.

**What would you say to Jesus?** Affirm responses. **Inside the conversation balloon, write in the words you would say to Jesus.** Brainstorm some ideas about what kids could say to Jesus. For example: "What happened?" "I thought you died on the cross." "Welcome back, Jesus!" "I'm so happy that you are alive!" Pause to give kids time to write. Share responses with the class.

Spark Resources  
Leaflets

Supplies  
Pencils  
Markers

# Activate Faith (15 minutes)

## Go and Tell!

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**Let's look at the third page of the leaflet. The women found Jesus first. Jesus gave them a special job. He told them to go tell the others the good news. When we solve this puzzle, we'll find out the good news that Jesus wants the women to share.**

**Look at all of the pretty flowers. The tomb where Jesus was buried was in a garden. It may have been surrounded by pretty flowers like these ones. What do you notice about some of the flowers?** *(They have numbers and letters written inside of them.)* **Let's look for the flower with a number 1 inside of it. What color is it?** *(white and purple)* **What letter is also inside of that number?** *(J)* **Write a "J" in the first blank. Now let's find the flower that has a number 2 inside of it. What color is it?** *(orange)* **What letter is also inside of that flower?** *(E)* **Write "E" in the number 2 blank.** Pause to give kids time to write. **But there's also another number in this flower. What number is it?** *(12)* **Write an "E" in blank number 12, too!** Continue working together in this way to solve the puzzle. *(Solution: Jesus is alive!)*

Spark Resources  
Leaflets

Supplies  
Pencils

## Tombs in Jesus' Time

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**Turn to the back page of your leaflets. Four women went to visit Jesus' tomb on Easter morning. They were Mary Magdalene, Salome, Joanna, and Mary, the mother of James. What were tombs like in Jesus' time? I'll read the words out loud, while you look at the pictures.**

- **The tomb where Jesus was buried was cut out of rock. It looked like a little cave.**
- **A round stone covered the entrance to the tomb. It was like a door. It could be rolled away to open the tomb.**
- **Inside the tomb were platforms where the bodies were placed.**
- **Jesus' tomb was in a garden. This photo of a great big tree is from the Garden of Gethsemane the way it looks today. Jesus prayed in this same garden when he was alive.**
- **Families were buried in family tombs.**
- **People were usually buried outside the village where they were born.**

Spark Resources  
Leaflets

Supplies  
None

# The Empty Egg Game

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Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for learners who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.

Before class fill nine eggs in each carton with jelly beans. Leave the remaining three empty. Fill each egg carton with nine filled and three empty eggs.

**How did Jesus surprise the women who came to the tomb?** (*The tomb was empty.*)  
**Why was it good news that box #1 was empty?** (*Jesus was alive, not dead in the tomb.*)

**Let's play an egg-rolling game. First we need two teams.** Divide the kids by the colors of clothing they are wearing, creating two equal teams. Pick up an egg carton and open it up to show the kids what's inside. **What do you see inside the egg carton?** (*12 plastic eggs*) **Some of the plastic eggs inside this carton have a treat inside of them and some of them are empty.**

**Here's how we play the game. One by one, the players on each team will run down to the egg carton, select an egg, and roll it back to their team using their feet. The team then opens the egg. If it's empty, the team calls out "Jesus is alive!" and the game continues. If the egg has something in it, the team calls out "Happy Easter!" empties the candy into their team's bowl, and the game continues. We'll keep playing until each team has rolled all of its eggs. It's Easter! Let's celebrate the good news.**

Give each team a bowl. Place one egg carton per team (filled with plastic Easter eggs) at one end of the room. Begin the game at the opposite end of the room from the egg cartons. After each team has finished, eat the jelly beans to celebrate the sweet news that Jesus is alive!

## Spark Resources

None

## Supplies

2 empty egg cartons  
24 plastic Easter eggs  
Jelly beans  
2 bowls

# Send (5 minutes)

## Good-bye Time

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**Thank you for coming to class today! Today we learned that Jesus surprises us. Jesus surprised the women at the tomb. The tomb was empty! Where was Jesus? Jesus surprised the women in the garden. He was alive! We learned that emptiness can be very good news.**

Direct attention to the back of the Faith on the Go! slip on the bottom of the back page of the leaflet. Kids can fill in the blanks with the name of someone they want to give this slip to, their own name, and today's date. Encourage them to mark one or more of the ideas or add their own. Have kids cut the slip off on the line, ready to give to someone else.

## Spark Resources

Leaflets

## Supplies

Pencils  
Scissors

**After class, give this slip to someone you want to do the activity with. It's like a coupon for time with you. Next week, we can tell each other what we did to share God's love and remember our Bible story!**

**It's time for our Go Out! circle.** Give kids time to stand with you in a circle. **Today we heard Jesus surprises us! Let's say it together: Jesus surprises us! Let's go out with God's love!** Say this rhyme together while doing the motions:

**Put both hands in,  
Put both hands out,  
Put hands up high,  
And shake them all about.  
Spin around once,  
Spin again and shout:  
Go, God! Go, us! Let's go out!**

## Prayer Time

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**How do you think the four women felt when they saw that Jesus was alive?**

Affirm responses. **Some of them may have felt like jumping up high and cheering! Let's close our lesson with a cheer, celebrating that Jesus lives! Repeat each line after me.**

**Hip, hip, hip, hooray!  
Jesus Christ is risen today!  
Shout it high! Shout it low!  
Shout it everywhere you go!**

**Hip, hip, hip, hooray!  
Jesus Christ is risen today!  
The tomb is empty! He's alive!  
Give your friends a big high five! (Pause to do this.)  
Hip, hip, hip, hooray!  
Jesus Christ is risen today!**

**It looks like we have one more box to open. Let's find out what you guessed about this box.** Read kids' guesses and unwrap box #3. Without the kids seeing what is inside the box, grab all of the streamers together, throw them up high, and shout, **"Surprise! Jesus is alive!"** Ask the kids to pick up one streamer apiece. Go around the circle and drape each kid's streamer around the back of his or her neck and over the front of his or her shoulders as you say: **Jesus is alive! It's your job [Name] to tell the good news!**

Be sure to send the leaflets, streamers, and Family Pages home with kids.

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Family Pages



Supplies

Box #3 from Arrival Time

Guesses on the whiteboard  
from Arrival Time