

# BIBLE BACKGROUND

## JOURNEY 6: *RESCUE 911*

### *The Resurrection*

**KEY PASSAGE:** John 20

**KEY WORD:** 911

**KEY VERSE:** Philippians 4:6–7

**KEY THOUGHT:** Rescue those who are lost by sharing the Gospel.

### **IT IS FINISHED!**

The rescue had been successful, but the Rescuer had died in the process. The tragedy of the hour hung over the faithful friends and family who had watched Jesus take His last breath. The enormity of the loss was only beginning to sink in. What would His disciples do now?

### **SUNDOWN SABBATH**

Late Friday afternoon, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pontius Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. This Joseph is mentioned in all four gospels. He appears to be a secret supporter of Jesus who recognized Him as Messiah. However, he is only mentioned in connection with Christ's burial. He had only three hours before sundown when the Sabbath would begin. He would have purchased the linen for the burial clothes, made arrangements for the burial anointing and prepared the tomb. Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus at night in John 3, met Joseph with nearly 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes (John 19:39). Together they prepared the body and placed it in a garden tomb. Mark records that Mary Magdalene and another woman stood silently by as the stone was rolled into place.

It is interesting to note how God had ordained specific people to care for His Son during His time on earth.<sup>13</sup> Jesus was pure and sinless and those who understood treated Him with honor and reverence.

- Jesus had come into the world, born of a virgin who had never known a man (Luke 1:31).
- Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on which no man had ever ridden (Mark 11:2).
- Jesus was laid in a tomb where no man had yet been laid (John 19:41).

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<sup>13</sup> *The Christ* by Carroll Roberson, New Leaf Press, 2005, p. 251.

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Joseph and Nicodemus loved Jesus so much that they found the courage to ask the Roman governor for His body so that it could be treated with love and honor.

## **SEPULCHRE SEALED: *Matthew 27:62–66***

On Saturday the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate to remind him what this impostor Jesus had said, “After three days I will rise.” They asked Pilate to seal the tomb at least until the third day so that His disciples might not come and steal the body away and say that He had risen. Pilate sent guards to seal the tomb and to stand watch. The Jewish religious leaders must have been pleased with themselves as they went to bed that Saturday night. They must have been very confident that they had successfully ended the life of this one they considered to be a false Messiah, but Sunday was coming.

## **SUNDAY CELEBRATION**

When the four Gospel narratives are combined, the order of events on Sunday can be better understood.

1. Early Sunday morning, the women who had supported the ministry of Jesus and followed Him from place to place went to the tomb to anoint the body with additional spices. There were three of them: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. They must have wondered how they were going to be able to move the stone to gain access to the body. There was no need to worry (Mark 16:1).
2. The three women discovered that an angel had rolled the stone away. The guards were terrified by the angel and ran away. The angel had come to announce that Jesus had risen as He had said he would (Matthew 28:1–7).
3. Mary Magdalene hurried to tell Peter and John, who ran to the tomb to see for themselves. John got to the tomb first but did not go in. Peter wanted to see if the body was really gone, so he went in without hesitation. John then went in and saw the linen cloths and the folded napkin in a place by itself. (John 20:3–7).
4. Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb and stooped down to look in. Inside she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been placed, one at the head and one at the feet. They asked her why she was crying and she explained how the Lord’s body must have been taken away. She then turned around to see someone standing there in the garden with her. Thinking He was the gardener, she asked if He had taken the body away. Jesus spoke her name and she recognized her Master’s voice. Mary Magdalene was the first to see Jesus alive (John 20:11–16).
5. As the other women left to tell the rest of the disciples, Jesus appeared to them. They bowed down in worship when they recognized Him. His instructions to them were to tell the disciples to go to Galilee and there He would meet them (Matthew 28:8–10).

## A MERRY MARY

The most profound announcement the world has ever received occurred on that Easter morning when the angel said to Mary: “He is not here; for he is risen” (Matthew 28:6). Mark asserts that Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene, “out of whom He had cast seven devils” (Mark 16:9). Why did Jesus not appear first to one of His disciples like Peter or John? Why Mary? Had she known more of His grace than the others? Had her sin required more of His mercy? Did she know better than the rest what forgiveness and deliverance really looked like? Or, had she understood what the Master had told them: “And when the Son of Man is killed, after three days he will rise” (Mark 9:31)? Had she comprehended what the disciples had failed to see?

Such questions cannot be answered with certainty, but what became apparent is the depth of her love that could not bear separation from her Lord. Jesus would have seen this devotion in her spirit and He rewarded it with a new revelation of Himself. Her joy would have been uncontainable. Her faith would have multiplied a thousand-fold. Her trust would have been vindicated. She had experienced **THE RESCUE** because she had believed in **THE RESCUER**.

## RESURRECTION RESCUE

The Resurrection of Christ guarantees an answer to the believer’s ultimate 911 call. His Resurrection is the foundation of the Christian faith. If the Roman soldiers or the Jewish religious community could have presented the body of Jesus, then Christianity would have died in the first century. The enemies of Christ had no physical body to prove Him a liar. It is historical fact that He was crucified and buried and risen. He was seen alive by more than 500 people (1 Corinthians 15:6). Paul declared that if there had been no Resurrection, then our preaching would be in vain (1 Corinthians 15:13–19). Christ is the “first fruit” of our own promised rescue. Just as in Adam, all men were separated from a Holy God, so in Christ all men can be rescued from eternal death through faith in His work on the Cross.



# TEACHING PLAN

## JOURNEY 6: RESCUE 911

### *The Resurrection*

<b>KEY PASSAGE</b> John 20	<b>KEY VERSE</b> Philippians 4:6–7
<b>KEY WORD</b> 911	<b>KEY THOUGHT</b> Rescue those who are lost by sharing the Gospel.



## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

**A. CONNECT** the Big Room experience with the Bible story by asking the students questions about what they saw.

- “Which character needed a rescue?”
- “What had caused the situation from which he/she had to be rescued?”
- “What consequences would have resulted without the rescue?”
- “What did the main character learn from the situation?”

## B. BAD NEWS/GOOD NEWS

Leaders are to **TAKE** a newspaper and on the front page write: **MIRACLE WORKER KILLED** in bold, black letters. Create 14 additional headlines out of the want ads by writing in bold, black marker the following headlines. *[It will take a little time to prepare the newspapers but the effect can be dramatic as the students discover the bad news and the good.]*

BAD NEWS	GOOD NEWS
“PILATE AND HEROD AGREE FOR ONCE”	“FORECAST—SUNNY SUNDAY”
“UNEXPECTED ECLIPSE OF THE SUN”	“SOLDIERS DESERT THEIR POST”
“9.9 EARTHQUAKE RECORDED IN JERUSALEM”	“STONE MYSTERIOUSLY MOVED”
“SUDDEN OPENINGS OF GRAVE SITES OCCUR”	“BODY REPORTED MISSING”

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"VEIL OF TEMPLE FOUND RIPPED"	"ANGEL SIGHTINGS OUTSIDE CITY"
"KING OF THE JEWS PUT TO DEATH"	"THE KING OF KINGS IS ALIVE!"
"ROMAN SOLDIER SHAKEN UP"	"DEAD MAN SEEN WALKING— EVERYWHERE"

**COMMENT** on how you have heard some unbelievable reports this morning about supernatural happenings. You thought you needed to bring the Sunday newspaper and share with the class what's been going on. **HOLD UP** the front page that says: *Miracle Worker Killed*.

**COMMENT** on all the bad news you have found in the paper. **PASS OUT** the bad news headlines to one table group and ask them to read aloud what is being reported.

Then **TELL** them you want to hear some good news. **PASS OUT** the good news headlines and **HAVE** the students read them aloud. **ASK** if they have any idea what could be going on. Then **PULL OUT** one last section of the paper on which you have written:

## ***MAJOR RESCUE OPERATION UNDERWAY FOR ALL MANKIND***

**TRANSITION** to today's lesson by explaining how the world is desperately searching for good news in these troubled times. The Bible has the news that everyone is looking for. Jesus has rescued us from the punishment of our sins and has promised us eternal joy. What better news could there be? Let's see how such good news first got out.



## **EXPLORING THE BIBLE PASSAGE: JOHN 20:1–18**

**SAY:** The Sabbath had been a long hard day for the followers of Jesus. Their hopes for a Messiah had been shattered when the Romans crucified Jesus on Friday. More than likely the disciples were hiding for fear they would be next. As the sun was about to dawn on Sunday, Mary Magdalene and some of the other women went to the tomb where Jesus had been laid. They wanted to finish anointing His body with burial spices. **SAY:** Let's read what happened in John 20.

- **Verses 1–2:** What did they find when they got there?
- **Verses 3–5:** Who ran to the tomb to see if the report was accurate?
- **Verses 6–10:** What did Peter and John see inside the tomb?

- **Verses 11–18:** Why did Mary stay behind at the tomb? Who called out to her? How did she know who He was?



## TABLE TALK 1: THE ULTIMATE RESCUE

**BRAINSTORM** with the students about calling 911. When do you call? What are the important details to give to a 911 operator? If you called on Jesus to rescue you, what important information would you need to give Him? (*confession, repentance, request to be your Savior*) How quickly would He respond? Any delays? Any rejections?

**ASK** the students to explain how a person can be rescued by Jesus. **ASK** what Scripture verses can be used when talking to someone about a rescue (*Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:9–10; Ephesians 2:9–10*).

**SAY:** People don't always understand the dangers they face without Jesus. It is up to each one of us to be 911 operators. We need to tell others about Jesus even before they ask us for help. Jesus rescues us with love and then fills us up with joy.



## THE CROSSROADS

**SHARE** the plan of salvation and close in prayer. No one should ever die because of his sin when Jesus is available to anyone who will call on His name in faith.



## TABLE TALK 2: RESCUE 911

*(Suggested for Grades 3–6)*

**GIVE** each student 10 squares of paper and a brad. On the front of the first square have them write the words **RESCUE 911**. **WRITE OUT** the following verse references and key words (*one per square*) that could be used to explain the plan of salvation. [*Our students may know the ABC's of Salvation but they may not know the Scriptures that back them up.*] **USE** a brad to secure the squares, which can then be kept in the students' backpacks in case of an *emergency witnessing situation*. **CHALLENGE** the students to memorize all the verses listed here so they can be ready to give an answer for the hope that lies within them.

- Romans 3:23 – **SIN**
- Romans 5:8 – **LOVE**
- Romans 6:23 — **DEATH**
- Romans 10:9—**CONFESS**
- Ephesians 2:9–10 – **GRACE VS. WORKS**
- Romans 10:13 – **WHOEVER**
- John 3:16 – **BELIEVE**
- John 11:25 – **RESURRECTION**
- John 20:31 – **JESUS, MESSIAH**

# JOURNEY 6



## BIBLE LEARNING PROJECT: *Empty Crosses*

**Supplies:** Empty cross-shaped sand bottles, sand, small funnels or squeeze bottles, foil trays, paper plates, key thought sticker

- Distribute foil trays and sand with small funnels, or squeeze bottles filled with sand, among the students.
- Provide each student with an empty cross-shaped bottle, a paper plate and a key thought sticker.
- Direct the students to fill their cross sand bottle with sand, then affix the key thought sticker to the bottle.
- Allow the paper plates to catch any excess sand, which can be returned to the foil tray and later added back to the craft room sand supply.

**REMIND** the students that Jesus left His royal home in Heaven to come to earth to die. Just as the cross is empty until you fill it up with sand, our lives are empty until we allow Christ's love to fill our minds.



## SCRIPTURE MEMORY: *Philippians 4:6–7*

**HAVE** students get with their table groups and practice saying verses 6–7 as a group. **GIVE** them five minutes to practice and then **HAVE** each group stand and recite the verse aloud.



## A LOOK AT THE BOOK

**CONDUCT** a Bible Drill activity using the Scriptures from Table Talk 2. **HAVE** the students look up each verse. **COMMENT** on how important it is to know where to find the verses that explain the plan of salvation.



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. On what day was Jesus buried? (*Friday*)
2. On what day did He first appear outside the tomb? (*Sunday, the first day of the week*)
3. How does Jesus rescue us? (*forgiveness, grace, eternal life*)
4. Who saw the resurrected Jesus first? (*Mary Magdalene*)
5. Which two disciples ran to the tomb when they first heard the news? (*Peter and John*)
6. What did Jesus rescue us from? (*separation from God after we die*)
7. Is Jesus the only way to be saved? (*Yes, Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:5; Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9–11*)
8. Explain what the word *sin* means. (*anything done, said or thought that is not compatible with the character of God*) Who has sinned? (*everyone*)
9. Can good works save a person from the punishment of sin? (*no*)
10. What Scripture tells us good works cannot save? (*Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:5*)