

Junior Soldiers

Unit 3 : Lesson 10



An Empty Tomb!

PURPOSE : To help the children understand that there is strong evidence that Jesus was dead but came back to life and to consider how we know that the story of the resurrection is true.

'I told you the most important part of the message exactly as it was told to me. That part is: Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say.

*He was buried, and three days later
he was raised to life, as the Scriptures say.'*

1 Corinthians 15:3,4 (CEV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

1 Corinthians 15:1–20

Mark 16:1–7

Luke 24:1–12 and 36–53

As Christians we live in relationship with the living Christ. This means that the resurrection is one of the main beliefs of Christian faith. But how do we know that Jesus really did come back to life? Why do we accept this seemingly impossible story as truth?

In this lesson, Junior Soldiers will explore this issue and examine the evidence of the resurrection of Christ using the Bible story. The study of Christ's resurrection is part of the academic theological stream known as 'apologetics', which relies not only on the biblical evidence but also on other ancient writings and research.

If you want to do some more in-depth preparation on this topic you could start with Josh McDowell's book *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* or Lee Strobel's *The Case for Christ*. If you want the ten-minute summary, look up 'Reliability of Christ's Resurrection - Lee Strobel' on YouTube.

It's important to be aware that there is a vast amount of study and research behind our claim that Christ was resurrected—you may have some 'sharper' kids who will say, 'Of course the Bible will say it's true; big deal. Is that the only evidence that Jesus came back to life?'

For Junior Soldiers particularly taken by this subject, you may like to get them a copy of Lee Strobel's book *Case for Christ for Kids* (available from Koorong).

What you will need:

- Statements for 'true or false' game
- Disposable gloves, plastic bags, crime scene markers, marker questions, pens, Bibles
- Print and cut up the marker questions for the 'Forensic Fact Finders' activity
- Optional: download this video from Max7
- 'The Resurrection of Jesus, Mark 16:1-7'
→ <http://www.max7.org/resource.aspx?id=76f0ad44-e0dc-469a-b263-64784610d487>
- Optional: computer and data projector or alternative to show video clips
- Print off 'Empty Tombs Activity sheet' for each of the children to take home
- Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards at the back of the lesson for each of the Junior Soldiers. They can place them in their notepad or journal to remind them of the challenge of this week.



Connecting In

Game - True or False...

Have a list of true or false facts. Choose a variety of things, some that are easy to guess, others may be a bit surprising and mysterious, you might like to include things about people they may all know either in their church or local community, e.g. teachers at school, local government or celebrities, corps officers, etc.

A few to get you started:

- Kiwis can fly. (False)
- Sir Edmund Hilary was the first person to climb Mount Everest. (True)
- The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1730. (False)
- The Southern Cross features on the New Zealand Flag. (True)
- $11 \times 11 = 132$. (False)
- The Tuatara a New Zealand reptile is the world's most ancient animal. (True)

Designate one side of your space as 'True' and the other as 'False.'

Each time the JS leader states the fact, the children run to either the 'True' or 'False' side indicating their decision about what they believe. You could play this as an elimination game if you have enough children in your group.



Link: Today we have been having a bit of fun with some true or false statements. It is not always easy to know if what someone is telling you is the truth or not. There are times when you need to look for other evidence to try and back up the statement that is being shared.

For example, if a friend of yours said that their family had been chosen to go on a reality television show, you would be looking for evidence of planning by the family to be at the filming venue. You would look for evidence of chatter from other family members about the show and you would look for the program being advertised on television.

The Bible tells us about Jesus' death and resurrection. Today we are going to explore the evidence surrounding this and how this evidence might impact the truth for us.

The Main Thing

Forensic Fact Finders...

During this section the Junior Soldiers will become forensic experts searching for evidence for Jesus' resurrection.

- Choose and set up a suitable area for this activity. If possible give children enough space to work in comfortably without being too crowded.
- If you have a larger Junior Soldiers group you may like to divide them into smaller groups of two or three to work together on this task.
- Use markers, something that looks like the plastic markers you would find at a crime scene, to identify each evidence point.
- Place a question, pieces of paper, pens and a Bible at each 'evidence point'.
- Give each child a pair of disposable gloves and a plastic bag to 'tag and bag' the 'evidence'.
- Junior Soldiers proceed to each evidence point, look up the different Bible references to answer the question then write the answer on a piece of paper and put into their plastic 'evidence' bag.



Below are the questions for Forensic Fact Finders—print this off and cut up the copies at the end of the lesson to put out at the evidence points.

- 1. How do you know that Jesus' body was not just stolen? Was the tomb secure?
→ Read Mark 15:46
- 2. What did the women see when they first saw the tomb?
→ Read Luke 24:1–2
- 3. What did the women find when they went to see the body of Jesus?
→ Read Luke 24:1–3
- 4. Who told the women that Jesus was alive?
→ Read Luke 24:3–7
- 5. Who saw the tomb was empty?
→ Read Luke 24:12
- 6. How does Jesus prove he is real and not a ghost?
→ Read Luke 24:36–39
- 7. Again, how does Jesus prove he is not a ghost?
→ Read Luke 24:40–43
- 8. Where had it been predicted that these things would happen to Jesus?
→ Read Luke 24:44–46
- 9. What was the biggest group of people who saw Jesus alive after his resurrection?
→ Read 1 Corinthians 15: 3–8

Leaders Note: These are the sort of answers the children may write down as their 'evidence'.

1. Tomb was solid rock with a stone rolled in front of it.
2. Stone was rolled away.
3. Tomb was empty.
4. Angels said Jesus was alive.
5. Peter saw the empty tomb.
6. Jesus shows his scars and they touch his flesh.
7. Ghosts can't eat but Jesus ate with them.
8. The things Jesus did had been written about in the books of the Law, the Prophets and Psalms years before.
9. More than 500

Watch a video clip (optional)

'The Resurrection of Jesus, Mark 16:1–7'

<http://www.max7.org/resource.aspx?id=76f0ad44-e0dc-469a-b263-64784610d487>

Tying In

Discussion

- How do you know if something is true?
- How do you test the truth of something you can't see for yourself?

The Christian faith hinges on the belief that Jesus rose from the dead.

Read together 1 Corinthians 15: 1–20 (CEV, if you can get it)

- If Jesus really did come alive again 2,000 years ago, should that mean anything for us today?
- Why did Jesus have to die? (*Jesus took our place and our punishment for turning our back on God. We can be made right with God if we accept what Jesus has done. This gives us God's forgiveness.*)
- Why do you think that Jesus' death on the cross can bring us forgiveness nearly 2,000 years later? (*His sacrifice was perfect, once for all time and all people, all we need to do is accept it.*)
- If Jesus is still alive, where is he? (See Luke 24:50–53)

Think about the first time you believed that Jesus actually came back to life.

- What helped you believe?
- Was it the evidence itself or did you trust the person who told you?
- Was it easy or difficult to accept this as being true?

You are a member of the continuing family of believers who have received the saving message of Jesus Christ that began 2,000 years ago. One of the first twelve disciples told someone who told someone etc., until someone told you. You too can share this information with others and introduce them into God's family.

Pray ...

Spend some time praying for those who do not know the truth about Jesus.



Home & Beyond

Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journal or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

Empty Tombs...

Your Junior Soldiers may like to make these 'Empty Tombs' for their Prayer Pal, family members, Kids Club etc or even for the whole Corps to receive on Easter Sunday morning.

Or they can take the sheet home and be encouraged to do this activity together as a family close to Easter.

Try and remember to read this scripture every day this week:

**'I told you the most important part of the message exactly as it was told to me.
That part is: Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say. He was buried, and three days later
he was raised to life, as the Scriptures say.'
1 Corinthians 15:3,4 (CEV)**



Home & Beyond

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Empty Tomb!

You will need:

- Biscuits with one side chocolate (eg Westons, Arnotts or generic brand 'Choc Wheaton')
- Hollow chocolate Easter eggs
- Chocolate for melting
- Toothpicks
- Re-useable adhesive putty (e.g. Blu-Tack)



Step 1
Take an Easter egg and cut it in half (use a warm knife).



Step 2
Lay the egg-half on top of the biscuit, on its side so that it resembles an empty tomb.



Step 3
Melt some chocolate and use it to 'glue' the egg to the chocolate side of the biscuit.



Step 4
Fix two toothpicks together to form a cross with a piece of Blu-Tack.

Step 5
Push the cross into the biscuit so that it stands next to the 'tomb'

