

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Cute baby chicks, delicious chocolate bunnies, colorful dyed eggs, and beautiful clothing in pretty pastels are commercial evidence that Easter approaches. In all fairness, there are a few items for sale that represent the true meaning of Easter. There are crosses found in the jewelry, crafts, candy, and bakery departments. There are usually a few more Bibles advertised and available, along with coloring and storybooks that tell the Easter story. Also, there are egg hunts, pageants, cantatas, and brunches to enjoy during the Easter season. But it's important to ask ourselves if we are embracing the true life-affirming implications of the Resurrection.

New Life

The resurrection of Christ makes possible the opportunity for renewal in our lives. Sin, death, and the grave can no longer hold hostage those whose faith is in Christ Jesus. Believers are able to live in the light of hope even in the midst of less than favorable circumstances. By God's grace we are able to share in the resurrection power of Christ, and we are empowered to live our lives walking in the purpose God has for us. Our new lives should stand in sharp contrast to our old way of life, being bound by the power of sin, helpless and without hope. Our new life in Christ, lived in the light and hope of Christ's resurrection, inspires us to share the good news of the gospel of Christ and do good things in the service of our Savior.

Eternal Life

Because Christ has been raised from the dead, all who have faith in him will also be resurrected to eternal life. Eternal death no longer has dominion over believers. When Paul describes the resurrection of believers in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, he instructs believers to comfort one another with those words. What peace it brings to know we do not have to fear or dread death! Because of Christ's resurrection we can view death as a short nap from which we will awake to experience glories far beyond our imaginations.



TIP FOR THIS ISSUE

Because the Crucifixion and Resurrection are closely related, the Crucifixion is often referred to on Easter. Also, because the passion and emotion of Good Friday may spill over into Easter Sunday, the Crucifixion may be emphasized more than the Resurrection. But try to keep today's focus on the Resurrection. Don't shy away from questions about the details of what happened at the Resurrection, but don't try to provide answers you don't have. Consider inviting a clergyperson to visit in the coming weeks to offer follow-up to any questions that arise.

LIVING OUR PURPOSE

Question of the Day: How does the resurrection of Christ affect your life?

Purpose: To remind teens of the life-affirming power of the Resurrection.

Cultural Connection: Easter

Topic: Resurrection

RENEWED LIFE

Romans 6:4-5

Therefore, we were buried together with him through baptism into his death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too can walk in newness of life. If we were united together in a death like his, we will also be united together in a resurrection like his. —Romans 6:4-5

Commentary:

In this Scripture passage Paul describes baptism as an act of burial for the old, sinful life. In fact, we are baptized into Christ's death in order to be resurrected with him to a new life. The resurrection of Christ made it possible for believers to be free from sin's power and live in a manner that shows a stark contrast between the former sinful self and the new Christlike self, living in the power of the Resurrection. This renewed life provides a glimpse of our resurrection to come.

Questions to think about:

- ▶ In what ways has your life been renewed in Christ?
- ▶ What does it mean to be free from the power of sin?
- ▶ What does it mean to you to be united with Christ in his resurrection?

PURPOSEFUL LIFE

Ephesians 2:4-10

However, God is rich in mercy. He brought us to life with Christ while we were dead as a result of those things that we did wrong. He did this because of the great love that he has for us. You are saved by God's grace! And God raised us up and seated us in the heavens with Christ Jesus. God did this to show future generations the greatness of his grace by the goodness that God has shown us in Christ Jesus.

You are saved by God's grace because of your faith. This salvation is God's gift. It's not something you possessed. It's not something you did that you can be proud of. Instead, we



are God's accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives. —Ephesians 2:4-10

Commentary:

Paul explained to the Ephesian church that God loved humanity so much that God raised us from the death of sin just as God raised Christ from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is also our resurrection by the mercy and grace of God. We did not earn this position. It is God's precious gift to us. God planned that we fulfill our purpose in life by doing good things and sharing God's love with others.

Questions to think about:

- ▶ What do you believe your purpose in life to be?
- ▶ How can you live that purpose in light of the Resurrection?
- ▶ In what ways does the Resurrection inspire you to do good things?

ETERNAL LIFE

1 Corinthians 15:20-22

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead. He's the first crop of the harvest of those who have died. Since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came through one too. In the same way that everyone dies in Adam, so also everyone will be given life in Christ. —1 Corinthians 15:20-22

Commentary:

Some of the Corinthian believers did not believe in a physical resurrection of believers, although they certainly believed in the resurrection of Christ. They most likely believed that at **2**

TEACHER BIBLE PREP



Jerusalem Garden Tomb—one of two sites proposed as the place of Jesus' burial in Israel

death the soul and body are separated. Paul assured them that Christ's resurrection made possible the resurrection of all believers. Adam's sin brought eternal death to humanity, but Christ's resurrection brought eternal life to all who believe in him. We can look forward in hope to being raised to eternal life.

Questions to think about:

- ▶ Why do you think some people fear death?
- ▶ How does Christ's resurrection influence your thoughts and feelings about death?
- ▶ Meditate on the hope of your resurrection.



Christ Is Risen!!!

DEVOTION: THE TOMB IS EMPTY

Spend some time reading Luke 24, celebrating and thanking God that Jesus was raised from the dead.

A few years ago I became very ill during Holy Week and was hospitalized. I held out hope that I would be released from the hospital in time to attend Easter services at my church. But, sadly, Saturday afternoon my physician gave me the bitterly disappointing news that I was not well enough to be released. I wept.

The nurse who attended me was a Middle Eastern male with a strong accent and loving spirit. We both were Christians and expressed to each other our love of celebrating the resurrection of Christ. Although I enjoyed talking with this kind man, I was still disappointed to be in the hospital at Easter and miss celebrating with my church family. I cried myself to sleep that night feeling sad and helpless.

As Easter morning dawned, I opened my eyes to see my nurse and fellow believer standing over me with a joyful expression. He said: "The tomb is empty! He is risen as he said!" Suddenly I felt the resurrection power of Christ at work inside me! My tears of sadness were replaced by tears of joy and hope.



They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. . . . 'He isn't here, but has been raised. . . . The Human One must be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and on the third day rise again.'" —Luke 24:2, 6-7

NEXT WEEK: Felt any stress lately? April is Stress Awareness Month, so next week in LINC we'll talk about how as Christians we can turn to God and one another for support during stressful times.

LINC: Living in Christ is an official resource of The United Methodist Church approved by Discipleship Ministries and published by Youth Ministry Partners and Cokesbury: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2222 Rosa L. Parks Blvd., PO Box 280988; Nashville, TN 37228-0988.

Scripture quotations unless noted otherwise are from the Common English Bible. Copyright © 2011 by the Common English Bible. All rights reserved. Used by permission. (www.CommonEnglishBible.com)

Available by e-mail subscription by calling toll free: 800-672-1789. Also available for download from <http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/digitalstore.aspx?vl=Digital%20Curriculum&catname=LINC&sortorder=5>.

Writer: Rose Taylor

Editor: Kevin Alton

Lead Editor: Jack Radcliffe

Production Editor: Pam Shepherd

Template Designer: Micah Kandros

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

Getting Ready: You will need copies of Youth Page 6, pens or pencils, Bibles, large sheets of paper, drawing paper, colored markers, videos depicting the events of the Resurrection, along with devices for viewing.

OPEN

Rise Up!

(10 minutes)

Hand out drawing paper and markers before showing video clips of Resurrection events. Form small groups and ask each to draw pictures of how they imagine the Resurrection in their minds. They may draw one picture of one event, or they may draw a series of event pictures. Allow those who wish to act out their depictions.

EXPLORE

Talk Topic 1: Living a New Way

(15 minutes)

Middle School Option

Call on someone to read aloud Romans 6:4-5. Explain to students that in this passage Paul equates baptism with the death and burial of our sinful lives. In fact, through our baptism we are able to share in Christ's resurrection. Sharing in the resurrection of Christ breaks our chains and gives us freedom from sin's power. This freedom allows us to live in a new way, pleasing God instead of selfishly living to please ourselves. Believers in Christ have been raised from the darkness of despair and sin to the light of hope and new life. Ask and talk about the following:

- ▶ What differences do you notice between believers in Christ and unbelievers?
- ▶ How does belief in the Resurrection help you to live differently?
- ▶ What do you think it means to be free from the power of sin?

Hand out copies of Youth Page 6. Say: "Unscramble the words pertaining to the Resurrection. After unscrambling the words, use them to write on one of the blank book pages a short story about what the Resurrection means to you." (Answers: 1-Resurrection, 2-Easter, 3-renewal, 4-eternity, 5-purpose, 6-sepulcher, 7-humanity, 8-empty)

High School Option

As a group, read aloud Romans 6:4-5. Explain that Paul wanted the believers at Rome to understand that the resurrection of Christ had given them the opportunity to be free from the power of sin. Through their baptism they symbolically died to their sin and were resurrected to a new life. Their new way of living was meant to be in sharp contrast to their old life of sin. By identifying with Christ's resurrection, they could now live with resurrection power. This message was not only for the believers at Rome but also for us. Ask and talk about the following:

- ▶ Do you feel that sin still has power over you? Why or why not?
- ▶ How are believers to live in a new way?
- ▶ In what ways does Christ's resurrection give us power?

BONUS SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Call for a volunteer to read aloud Mark 16:9-14. Say: "This passage of Scripture describes several of Christ's post-resurrection appearances and the reactions of those to whom he appeared. Scripture depicts the resurrection of Jesus as a physical resurrection—Jesus did not appear as some ghostly apparition." Lead a discussion around the following:

- ▶ How do you think Mary Magdalene felt when she saw and talked with Jesus?
- ▶ Why do you think Jesus sent Mary Magdalene to the disciples rather than appear to them himself?
- ▶ What could be some reasons the disciples did not believe Mary Magdalene?
- ▶ What would it take to convince you that someone was raised from the dead?

Ask two or three students to read aloud a few verses each from Luke 24:13-32. Explain that this passage gives more details about Jesus' appearance mentioned in Mark 16:12-13. Ask and talk about the following:

- ▶ Why do you think the two men did not recognize Jesus until he broke bread?
- ▶ Why do you think Jesus left them when they recognized him?



Sharing in the resurrection of Christ
breaks our chains and gives us
freedom from sin's power.

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION



- ▶ Why do you think others didn't believe the men when they told what happened with Jesus?
- ▶ When is a time you failed to recognize Christ?

Talk Topic 2: Doing Good Things (15 minutes)

Middle School Option

Call on a volunteer or volunteers to read aloud Ephesians 2:4-10. Say: "Paul taught that it was because of God's love for humanity and God's mercy that we are allowed to share in the resurrection of Christ. The grace and mercy of God grants us that position as a gift. There is nothing we could have done to accomplish it. Sharing in Christ's resurrection gives meaning and purpose to our lives. God intends for us to live out our purpose in life doing good things. Ask:

- ▶ What are some good things we can do as we live out our purpose?
- ▶ In what ways does the resurrection of Christ give meaning to your life?
- ▶ What do you believe is your purpose in life?

Point out the remaining blank book page on Youth Page 6. Say: "I want each of you to pretend that you are eighty years old and have decided to write your autobiography. Describe how you hope to have lived your life spiritually, especially how you lived out what you believe may be your purpose. I realize some of you may not be certain about your God-given purpose yet, so don't be anxious. Write how you feel and think at this point in time."

When most teens are finished, call on those who are comfortable doing so to read aloud their mini-autobiographies.

High School Option

Ask for a volunteer or volunteers to read aloud Ephesians 2:4-10. Say: "In this Scripture Paul emphasized God's great love and mercy shown by allowing us to share in Christ's resurrection. Sharing in the power of Christ's resurrection is a gift given to us because of God's grace or unmerited favor, not because of anything we have done.

This sharing means that God intends for our lives to be lived according to God's purpose. Also, God has planned for us to do good things as we live out our purpose in life. Ask and talk about:

- ▶ Why does the resurrection of Christ call for us to live with purpose?
- ▶ How does it feel to share in Christ's resurrection?
- ▶ In what ways have you experienced the favor of God's grace?

Form small groups and ask each to brainstorm ideas for doing good and pleasing things for God and list on the back of Youth Page 6. After a few minutes, compile a class list on chart paper, then choose a project to accomplish in the weeks ahead.

Talk Topic 3: Living Forever (15 minutes)

Combined Middle School and High School Option

Read aloud 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 together. Say: "Some believers in the early church did not believe there would be a bodily resurrection of believers at Christ's return, even though they accepted the teaching of Christ's physical resurrection. This may have been due to a Greco-Roman belief that the soul and body were separated at death and only the soul experienced an afterlife. Paul emphasized that the physical resurrection of Christ made possible the physical resurrection of believers at his return and eternal life to all who believe in him." Ask:

- ▶ What doubts have you had about Christ's or our resurrection?
- ▶ Why do you think people fear death?
- ▶ How does belief in the resurrection of Christ affect your view of death?

Form small groups. Ask each group to develop a short skit about what they imagine our resurrection into eternity will be like. Call on groups to perform their skits.

TAKE AWAY

Encourage teens to meditate on the joy and hope that the Resurrection brings to our lives. In closing, pray that the resurrection will not be just another Bible story but rather one that inspires teens to live out their purpose while doing good things and looking forward to eternal life with Christ.

WORKING IT OUT

Resurrection Scramble/This Is Your Life



1. CEROITSENRUR

2. TSERAE

3. WENALER

4. TINYRETE

5. SOPERUP

6. CHLUPESRE

7. NITMUYAH

8. TPYME

1. The scrambled words to the right pertain to the Easter story. Unscramble the words then, on one side of the blank book pages above, use the words to write a short story of what the Resurrection means to you.

2. On the other blank book page above, write a brief autobiography. Describe how you hope to have lived your life spiritually, particularly how you lived out what you believe may be your purpose in life.

.....

Inherit the Mirth



In the Bible: Readings for the Week

MONDAY: Read John 10:17-18.

Why do you think Christ was willing to lay down his life for humanity?

TUESDAY: Read Job 19:25-27.

Does knowing that Christ lives give you assurance of your resurrection?

WEDNESDAY: Read John 20:1-10.

What convinces you that Christ's resurrection is true?

THURSDAY: Read Daniel 12:2-3.

What do you think the resurrection of humanity will be like?

FRIDAY: Read 1 Corinthians 15:17-18.

What would life be like if Christ has not been resurrected?

SATURDAY: Read John 11:21-27.

Meditate on how Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.

WHAT'S TRENDING?

What's unique about your family Easter tradition? Tweet or post your response with the hashtag #Easter on Twitter to @YMPartners or on facebook.com/youthministypartners