

The Case of the Empty Tomb

Theme

The resurrection of Jesus

Object

A mystery novel which you can find at the library

Scripture

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!"
And she told them that he had said these things to her. John 20:18 (NIV)

Do you like mystery stories? When I was a kid, I loved to read mystery books. My favorites were the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. I especially liked "The Mystery of the Flying Express" and "The Yellow Feather Mystery." Kids today might prefer some of the Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen mystery books such "The Case of the Cheerleading Camp Mystery" or "The Case of the Weird Science Mystery."

Today we are going to hear the most exciting mystery story ever told. I call it "The Case of the Empty Tomb."

The story begins very early in the morning on the first day of the week. Jesus had just been crucified and buried. Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus' followers, went to the tomb where Jesus was buried. When she got there, she saw that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Peter and John and said to them, "They have taken the Lord's body from the tomb and I don't know where they have put him."

Peter and John raced to the tomb. John got there first. He looked in the tomb and saw the linen wrappings lying there. Then Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linens that John had seen lying there. As he investigated further, he saw the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was also folded and lying apart from the other wrappings. After Peter looked around for a few

minutes, John joined him inside. When they were sure that the tomb was empty, they left and went home.

Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she looked inside the tomb and saw two angels sitting there. One of them was sitting at the head and the other at the foot where the body of Jesus had been lying. "Why are you crying?" the angels asked.

"Because they have taken my Lord and I don't know where they have put him," she answered.

Then Mary turned and was about to leave when she saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. "Woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her.

Mary, thinking that he was a gardener said, "Sir, if you have taken my master away, tell me where he is so that I can go to him."

"Mary!" Jesus said.

When Jesus spoke her name, Mary knew who he was. She turned to him and cried out, "Teacher!"

"Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I have not yet ascended to my Father. "Go and tell my brothers that you have seen me and that I am going to return to my Father and your Father, my God and your God."

Mary found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord." Then she gave them the message that Jesus had told her to tell them.

And that solves "The Case of the Empty Tomb." The tomb is empty because Jesus is not dead, he is alive! He is risen just as he said!

Heavenly Father, the empty tomb is no mystery to us. He is risen! We rejoice in his name. Amen.

Interactive Group Activities
by Carol Williams & Charles Kirkpatrick

Sermon Title: "The Case of the Empty Tomb"

Scripture Reading: John 20:1-18

STONE ROLLING: If the teacher can find a couple of large stones that are hard to roll, the class can have a relay or take turns in trying to ROLL that large stone or rock. Tell the children that they will hear about a large stone being rolled away, in today's Bible lesson.

SCAVENGER HUNT: Let the children hunt for items that might have something to do with today's story and Jesus' resurrection such as a stone, linen, cloth, and picture of an empty tomb. After the children have found all the items that the teacher gives them to find, let the children hold up their item as the Resurrection Story is told.

JESUS LIVES LETTERS: Have the children search for cut out letters for J-E-S-U-S L-I-V-E-S that are hidden around the room. The children will bring the brightly colored letters back to their table and add glitter glue for decoration and glue the letters in the correct order on a poster board.

TOMB PAINTING: Let the children PAINT a picture of a tomb on a piece of construction paper with grass and clouds, etc around the tomb. Paint HE LIVES above the tomb art.

CROSS BOOK MARKERS: Give the children supplies to draw and cut out a cross from card stock. Decorate it with stickers and colored markers to make a book marker. Write I HAVE SEEN THE LORD, or JESUS LIVES on the cross. Add a ribbon put through a hole at the top of the cross.

PLAY ACTING: Let the children play act the resurrection story as told in today's lesson. Designate children to play the roles of angels, Mary, disciples, Peter, John, and the gardener. Place a sheet over a table to be the empty tomb that the children can crawl into as they go under the table. Let the children take turns telling parts of the story while the other children act out today's story.

MYSTERY SNACKS: Give each child an empty toilet paper roll to fill with small candies (M&Ms, jelly beans, etc.) and then write and decorate a small card with stickers and words from today's lesson. Place the card and candy inside the toilet paper roll, wrap it with tissue paper or wrapping paper and tie each end with a ribbon. Encourage the children to give their mystery snack to another person outside

the class. Then the teacher can surprise the children with a treat of cross-shaped cookies that the teacher has prepared ahead of time!

SING A SONG: HE IS LORD; HE LIVES

Song: "He Is Lord"

Words and Music (pdf)



MP3 Accompaniment Track

Song: "He Lives"

Words and Music (pdf)



MP3 Accompaniment Track

About Carol Williams

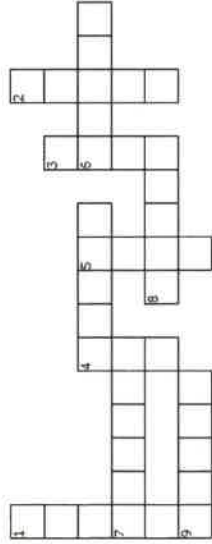
Carol and her husband have served churches in Illinois, Minnesota, Mississippi, Michigan, and Indiana. Carol loves to work with children so you will find her teaching in Junior Church and children's Sunday School. She also has clowning ministry in which she is known as Bubbles tc (the clown).

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Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- A piece of fabric made by weaving cotton, wool, or other fibers
- Not dead
- The day we celebrate Jesus' resurrection
- To have nothing inside
- What was used to cover the entrance to Jesus' tomb

EMPTY
STONE

EASTER
TOMB

CLOTH
CRY

WHITE
MARY

DOWN

- Messengers from heaven
- The color of snow; the opposite of black
- The woman who found the stone rolled away from Jesus' tomb
- To produce tears; to weep
- A grave or a room where someone is buried

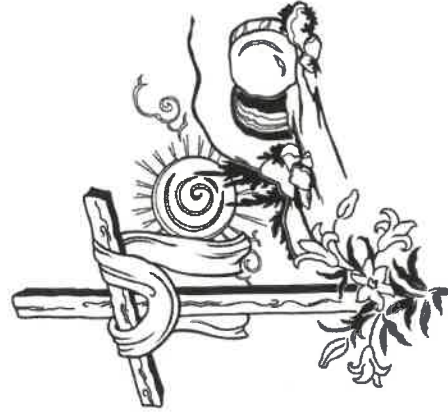
CRYING
WEEK
RISE
BELIEVED

STRIPS
ANGELS
REMOVED
LINEN

HEAD
FIRST
TOMB
DAY

DEAD
BURIAL
FOLDED
DARK

STONE
LORD
MARY
CLOTH



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Children's Worship Bulletin

The Case of the Empty Tomb

John 20:1-18

Word Search Puzzle

G A R D B B B E L I E V E D X
 A I A E O R B U R I A L M G H
 U E T W M D N L I N E N A Y K
 H R Q T K O S T R I P S R Y J
 B G A R F K V L R H I Q Y R E
 O N A N K L C E C L O T H Y N
 F D I L G D O R D X D A Y Q W
 I G I A B E G R Y P V Z V P W
 R D F M M A L N D I K R I L S
 S F O Y E D G S N Y N H W V X
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 P K P Z V E M W F L O E S N W
 Y B R J J E D R V E Q V E E V

CRYING
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STRIPS
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REMOVED
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BURIAL
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DARK

STONE
LORD
MARY
CLOTH

Your Church Name Here
Anytown, Anywhere

Coloring Page

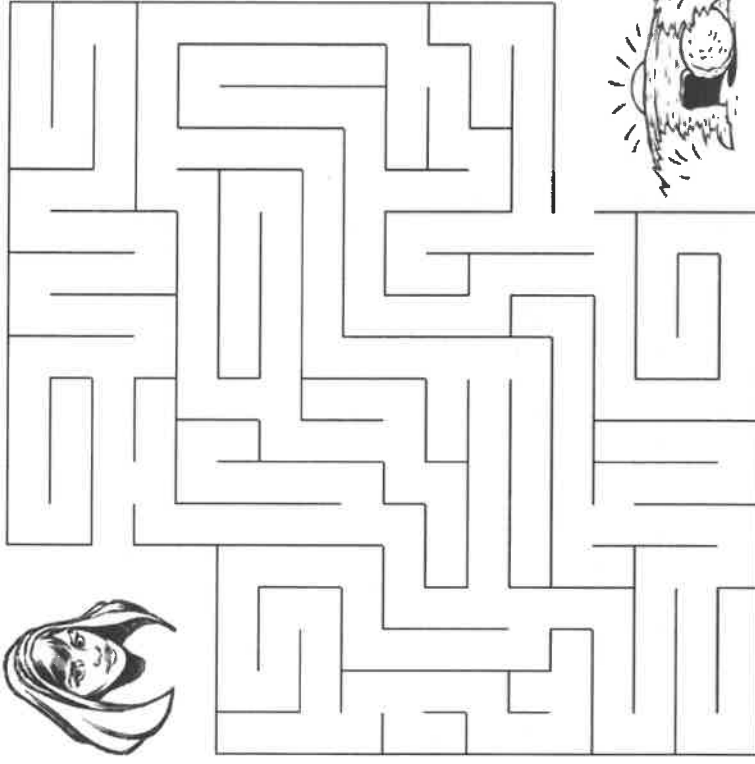


HE IS NOT HERE! HE IS RISEN!

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Maze Puzzle

Can you help Mary find the way to the empty tomb?



"They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"
John 20:2 (NIV)

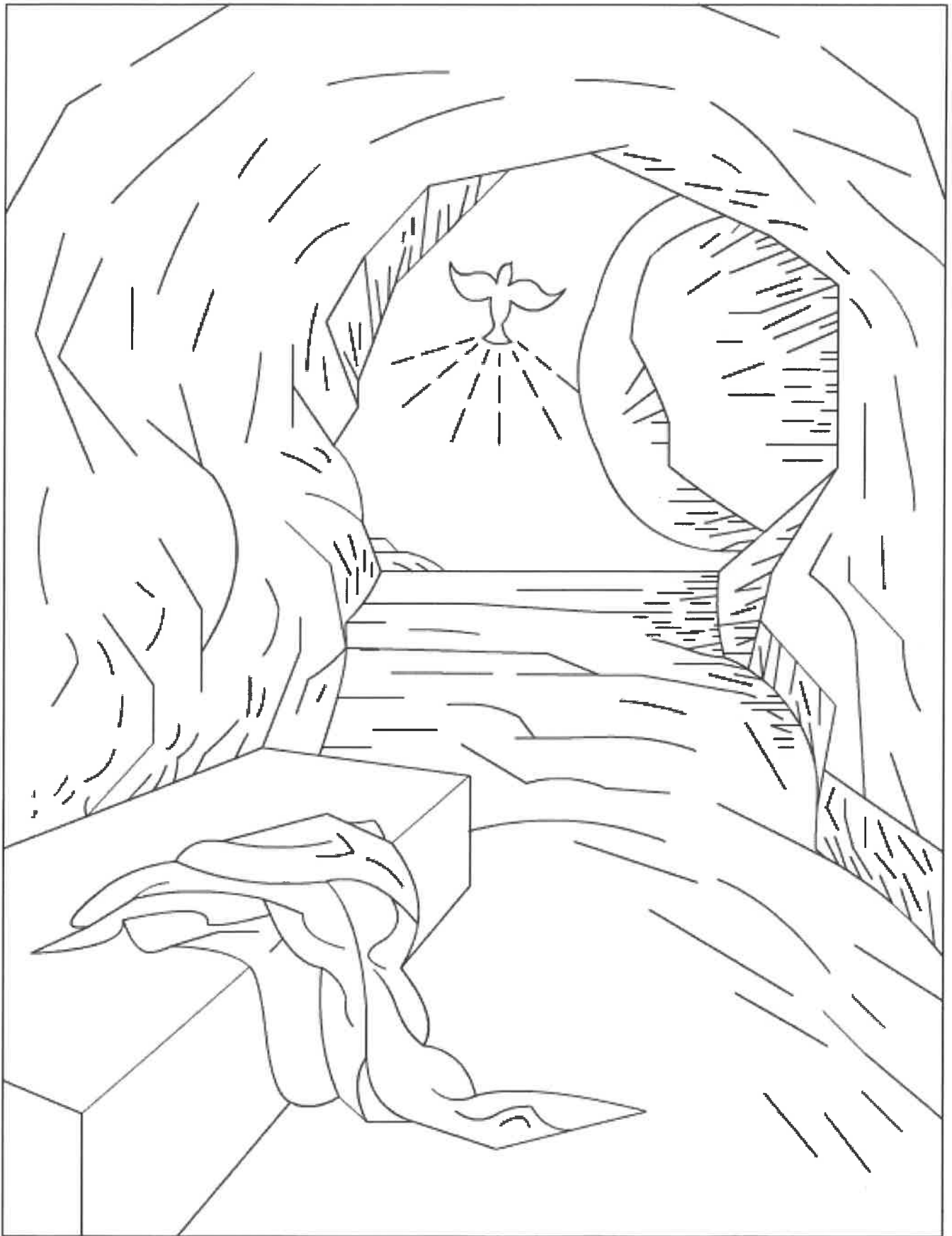




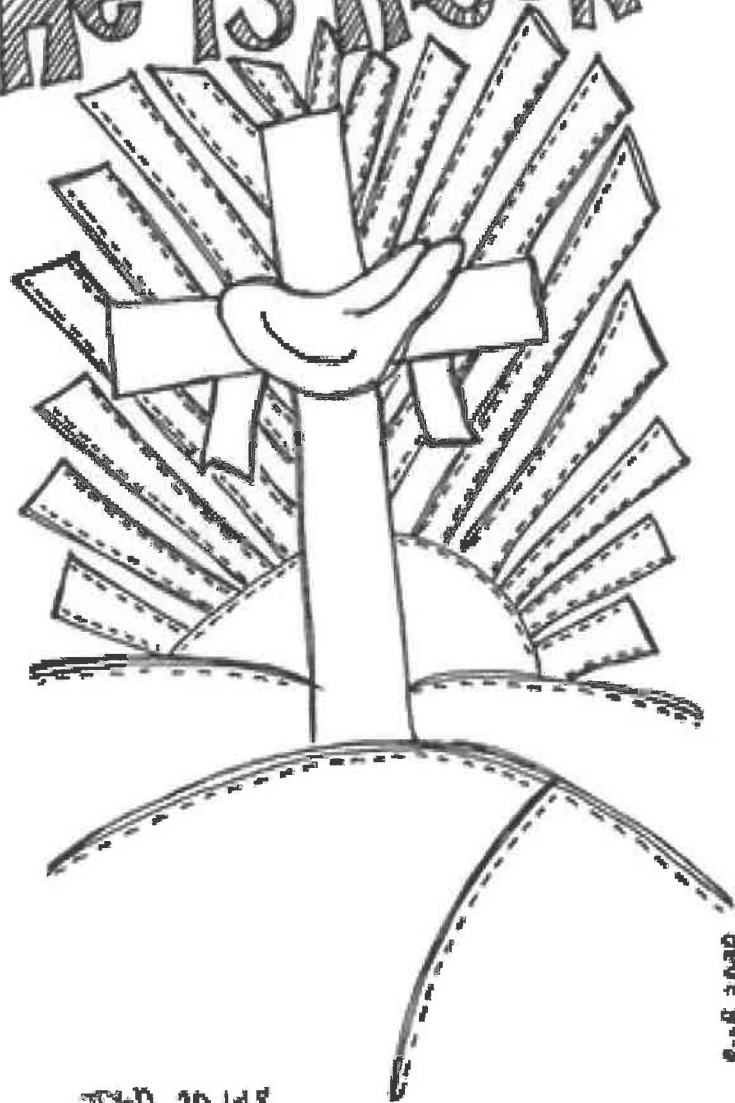
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He Is Risen



John 20:1-8

A Scripture card for your "Easter" Ministry 2002. Reusable in this format.

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