

Easter

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord."

Explore

—John 20:18 NRSV

Mary Magdalene

gift-wrapped boxes,
Bible, paper, pens

Before class, gift wrap empty boxes in bright paper and bows. Make sure there are enough for each teen to help unwrap one. Pass out the boxes, and ask the teens to open them. Discuss their reaction to the empty boxes. Were they disappointed? Read John 20:1–18 and review the story of Mary Magdalene and Jesus. Compare the teens reaction to the empty boxes with Mary Magdalene’s discovery of the empty tomb.

Later as she sat by the tomb crying over the loss of her dear friend, Jesus, he appeared to her. Why didn’t she recognize him? What had changed in him? Ask the teens to think of a past personal friendship that was separated by a move or other intervening factor. Have any of them had an opportunity to meet that friend at a later time? Ask them to share what that meeting was like. Were they able to continue their friendship as before or had the relationship changed? Was the meeting disappointing? What happened that caused the change?

The Resurrection celebrates Jesus’ triumph over death. This was the change Mary Magdalene saw in Jesus. He died, yet he lived. He was transformed. Each person’s understanding of this event is a personal journey. One testimony of the Resurrection may be the transformation in the lives of those who believe and follow Jesus. That change is continuous when we allow the presence of Jesus in our lives and try to grow closer to God. What testimony of the Resurrection have you seen in your life or the life of another? Respond on the paper provided. Allow willing teens to share their responses.

Extract

Bible

The Stone That the Builders Rejected

Psalm 118:1–2,
14–24

Create a spontaneous drama based on Psalm 118:1–2, 14–24. In a spontaneous drama, one person reads the passage pausing after phrases and sentences, allowing the actors to interpret the meaning through their actions. Not everyone needs to do the same actions, as not all interpretations will be the same. This allows for individual meaning development. Title the drama “The Stone That the Builders Rejected.” Explain the symbolism found in the chief cornerstone image before beginning.

Experience

Cyber Sites

pictures of Jesus,
paper, pens

Display several different pictures of Jesus around the room. Use pictures from children’s Bibles, posters, or from Internet Web sites like:

- www.sacredheart.com/icons.htm
- www.catholicshopper.com
- www.truthbook.com/

Pictures should represent a variety of styles from Orthodox icons to the art of Henrick Hoffman, Stephen Sawyer, and Warner Sallman—also to very contemporary and not-as-conventional artists.

The pictures represent how artists have “seen the Lord.” Spread the pictures out on the table or, better yet, the floor. Have students study the pictures. Have them consider which, if any, of these pictures represent what they think Jesus looked like. Did the artists leave out anything? Does Jesus look “too nice,” “too distant,” or not Godly enough in any of the pictures? Did they see anything new about Jesus that they hadn’t considered before? Have students select a picture that reaches out to them, then return to their seat. Have each student write (can be a statement, poem, rap, lyric) how they “see” Jesus, then have them introduce Jesus (their picture) to the rest of the class. Emphasize that the best way to introduce Jesus is to use their own words and their own experiences instead of quoting the Bible or using someone else’s testimony. If students are shy or do not think they have a testimony, have them describe what they think Jesus would say if he were at church with them today.

Grow With God

Because Jesus was crucified and resurrected, the potential for our lives changed. We have the potential to grow in the knowledge of God. Through Christ, we are given the strength, courage, and love it takes to reach closer to God. It is through the sacrifice of Jesus that this is possible. Have teens form a circle. Pass a fresh flower to each teen. Choose flowers such as carnations or daisies. As they go around the circle, have each teen remove a petal from their flower and place it in the basket at the center as they share one thing that would help them grow closer to God. Place the petals in a basket at the center of the group. Have a teen offer a prayer over the potential contained in the basket.

carnation or daisy
(one per teen),
basket

Expand

See and Hear It! Believe and Tell

Challenge the teens to go like Jesus’ followers: spreading the news of the Resurrection by going into the congregation or the community and telling at least one person that Jesus died for them and God loves them.