

EMPTY – TOMB

ABOUT THIS WEEK

This week your group will discover how an empty tomb brings them hope and joy.

ITEMS NEEDED

- Prayer Journal Bibles Pens

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- Pray for the group Print Discussion Guide Refreshments (optional)
 Clean meeting area Clean bathroom Crack open front door

OPENING (5-7 MIN)

Briefly welcome everyone and say: Since we just celebrated Easter let's go around the room—

WHAT DID YOU END UP DOING FOR SPRING BREAK AND/OR EASTER?

After a discussion, say: Well, even though Easter is come and gone, we can still consider the power of the empty tomb for our daily lives.

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Say: But first, can someone start us off with a brief prayer for our time together?

AN ORAL TRADITION (2-4 MIN)

After the prayer say: We heard on Sunday that the early Church grew because people told the story of Jesus. It was an oral tradition first, before the eyewitnesses ever wrote it down. But even after writing it down, it remained an oral tradition because people who didn't have Bibles to read or Audible to listen to.

Let's recreate the experience of the oral tradition together for the resurrection account.

FIRST, EVERYONE TURN TO JOHN 20:11-18 AND LET'S READ IT TOGETHER, EACH OF US TAKING ONE VERSE AT A TIME.

NOW, ONE WILL READ JOHN 20:11-18 ALOUD FOR US AGAIN WHILE THE REST OF US CLOSE OUR BIBLES AND OUR EYES AND LISTEN.

FINALLY, EVERYONE CLOSE THEIR BIBLES AND CAN I GET A BRAVE VOLUNTEER TO TRY AND TELL THE STORY AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE, FROM MEMORY, FROM JOHN 20:11-18? AS THEY DO, THE REST OF US CAN JUMP IN IF THEY MISS A DETAIL OR GET A DETAIL WRONG.

After the exercise, say: One of the powerful concepts of the oral tradition is the collective wisdom of the group. Imagine the early Church sitting around in living room and telling the story together.

WHAT INSIGHTS DID THAT EXERCISE GIVE YOU TO THE IDEA OF GOD'S WORD, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH, OR MEMORIZATION? (OR SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY?)

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION (15-20 MIN)

Say: Aside from the experience of the oral tradition, there's the lesson of the empty tomb. On Sunday, we heard how the empty tomb means our life is full. Let's read a few verses that talk about this concept.

I'LL ASSIGN YOU A VERSE TO READ ALOUD FOR US AND THEN WE ANSWER AS A GROUP, HOW DOES THIS VERSE SAY THE RESURRECTION CHANGES OUR LIFE?

ROMANS 8:11

EPHESIANS 1:18-20

ROMANS 10:9

2 CORINTHIANS 5:15-17

1 PETER 1:3

ROMANS 6:4

ROMANS 8:34

1 CORINTHIANS 6:14

After the reading, say: Ultimately, the empty tomb does two things—one, it makes the things of this world start to feel empty and two, it fills us. It fills us with meaning, hope, power, joy, the list goes on!

AS YOU CONSIDER THE RESURRECTION RIGHT NOW, WHICH BEST-DESCRIBES YOU: A) IT MAKES THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD FEEL EMPTY OR B) IT FILLS MY LIFE WITH MEANING? AND WHY?

After a discussion, say: May the truth of Christ's resurrection continue to impact your daily life as we move forward from Easter.

ANNOUNCEMENTS TO SHARE (2-3 MIN)

Say: Before we get to our prayer requests, a big announcement—

- All month long in April, our Small Group will be planning our **PROSPER THE CITY** project. This means we will meet twice or three times (depending on how long we want the meetings to be) to plan a service project sometime between April 28th and May 4th
- Kids are welcome to join us, if we prefer.
- As a review, we plan the project (not a program) using our own gifts and abilities that makes an immediate impact in our greater community.
- We'll hear more about it this coming Sunday at church.

CLOSING PRAYER (5-7 MIN)

Say: Let's close today with prayer.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS TODAY?

After writing the prayer requests in your group's prayer journal, ask if someone would like to close the group in prayer. If not, Host, close the group in prayer.