**CONTEXT FOR YOU**

Imagine you’ve been waiting months for a special event, maybe a concert, game, or big family gathering. The excitement builds, and when it finally happens, it’s even better than you expected! You can’t wait to tell everyone about it because it feels too big and amazing to keep to yourself. In John 20, the followers of Jesus experienced something way beyond their imagination—Jesus, who had died on the cross, was alive again! This news was so incredible that it changed their lives forever and was too good to keep quiet. Just like Mary and the disciples couldn’t keep the resurrection to themselves, we too are invited to live in the joy of Jesus’ victory over death and to share this life-changing news with others.

**What’s some news you heard or an experience you had recently that you just couldn’t wait to share?**

**OPEN THE CONVERSATION (5-7 minutes)**

Take some time to build relationships with the students:

* Ask for each student’s high and low from the week.

**DIG IN (15 MINUTES)**

***READ John 20:1-23 (Break Up Between People)***

1. **What would you have been thinking if you were Mary, John, or Peter in this story? Would it have been easy to believe in the resurrection?**
2. **When the morning first started, the disciples and Mary felt really far from God. Why do you think we sometimes feel distant from God?**
3. **John and Peter walked with Jesus throughout his ministry, they knew him. But didn’t believe the resurrection right away. What is the difference between *knowing* something and *believing* something?**
4. **Jesus told Mary to go and share the news of His resurrection. Why is the resurrection such an important event?**
5. **After appearing to the disciples,** **Jesus commissioned them to continue His mission. What does that mean for us today? How can you participate in that mission this week?**

**WRAP UP**

Put today’s lesson into action: ***Just as Mary and the disciples couldn’t keep the news of Jesus’ resurrection to themselves, we’re invited to live in the power of this good news. Jesus is alive and with us, giving us hope, peace, forgiveness, and purpose for our lives. Who is someone in your life that needs to hear this message this week?***

*Ask for any prayer requests and pray for one another. Thank Jesus for His victory over death and for the hope it brings us. Ask Him to help us find peace in Him and to give us boldness to share His message with others!*

**EXTENDED CUT**

1. **Why is the resurrection of Jesus so central to our faith? How does knowing Jesus conquered death impact your view of Him?**The resurrection of Jesus is central to our faith because it’s the proof that Jesus is who He said He is: the Son of God, with power over life and death. Without the resurrection, our faith would be meaningless. Paul explains this in 1 Corinthians 15:17, saying, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” Jesus’s resurrection means that His sacrifice on the cross really did pay the price for our sins, and that we’re truly forgiven and able to have a relationship with God. Knowing that Jesus conquered death shows us that nothing, not even our greatest fears or the finality of death, is too big for Him. He faced death and overcame it, which shows us His power, His love, and His commitment to us. When we know that Jesus is alive, it changes how we view Him because we know that we can trust Him with our lives, knowing He has already conquered the hardest battles for us! This truth gives us hope and courage, reminding us that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to help us in our struggles (Romans 8:11).
2. **John and Peter walked with Jesus throughout his ministry, but didn’t understand or believe the resurrection right away! It’s a reminder for us that knowing facts about Jesus is different from truly believing in Him. What area in your life is God calling you to move from knowledge to belief?**Knowing about Jesus is important, but truly believing in Him means trusting Him personally with every part of our lives. It’s the difference between knowing that a chair can hold you and actually sitting down in it. God calls us to move beyond simply knowing things about Jesus to actually living out our faith by trusting Him, especially in the hard or uncertain areas of our lives. This means trusting God with things like our future or relationships—things we often try to control ourselves. It can look like praying about things we’re anxious about, surrendering our plans to Him, or choosing to follow His way instead of what might feel easy or popular. Moving from knowledge to belief is about putting our faith into action, letting God be a real part of our daily lives and decisions.
3. **In today’s passage, Mary doesn’t recognize Jesus at first. Has there been a time in your life when you felt like God was distant? How does this passage encourage you of His nearness in these moments?**In John 20:15, we’re told Mary initially mistakes Jesus for the gardener. For reasons that are not made clear, Mary was kept from recognizing Jesus in this moment. Sometimes in our own lives, it can seem like God is distant. And this can especially feel true when things are difficult, or we feel too overwhelmed to see Him clearly. But Jesus was right there, closer than Mary realized, and it was when He called her by name that she recognized Him! This a great reminder for us that even when we don’t feel His presence, He is near, and He knows us personally. In Isaiah 41:10, God reassures us, “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.” Like Mary, we can be encouraged that God is always closer than we might feel, ready to comfort and guide us. Our task is to simply listen for His voice, especially in difficult moments, and to trust that He sees us, knows us, and is with us, even when we can’t immediately recognize Him.
4. **Jesus told Mary to go and share the news of His resurrection. What makes the resurrection a story worth sharing?**The resurrection is truly a story worth sharing because it changes everything when we understand what Jesus has done for us! When Jesus rose from the dead, He proved that He has power over sin and death, and that all His promises are true! This means that we’re not just left on our own to face life’s challenges or fears—Jesus is alive, and He offers us forgiveness, a new beginning, and the hope of eternal life. This is huge because it shows that even in a world that can feel uncertain or disappointing, there’s real hope. Because of the resurrection, we can have a personal relationship with God and know that nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:38-39). Sharing the resurrection means sharing a message of hope, redemption, and victory —things everyone is looking for, whether they know it or not.
5. **After appearing to the disciples,** **Jesus commissioned them to continue His mission. What does that mean for us today? How can you participate in that mission this week?**When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He gave them a mission: to spread the good news of His love, forgiveness, and victory over death to the whole world. This mission wasn’t just for the disciples back then—it’s for everyone who follows Jesus, including us today. It means we’re called to live in a way that reflects Jesus’s love and shares the truth of the Gospel with those around us. This week, you might share his love by being there for a friend who’s struggling, inviting someone to church, praying with someone, or simply sharing about what Jesus means to you and has done in your life. Matthew 5:16 uses light as an analogy for what it looks like for us to carry out this mission, giving the instruction to “let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Being part of Jesus’s mission is about bringing hope and light to those around us, showing them through both our words and actions that Jesus is alive and offers real hope for everyone!