



**SESSION 1** OF 4

# Easter Sunday



**MEETING AIM**

To discover what the hope of Easter means for us today.



**BIBLE PASSAGE**

John 20:1-18



**BACKGROUND**

Easter Sunday is a key moment in the Christian story. This session helps the group grasp the meaning and significance of the first Easter, and to remember that first fresh hope and what it might mean for us today. Bear in mind the members of your group who might be in particular need of hope, and consider their pastoral needs as the group discusses the ideas. There are some creative activities, so take some time to gather the materials you might need ahead of time.

**+ GATHERING TIME**



Welcome the group to the session and use the gathering time to discuss good news while you share out your refreshments. In the spirit of Easter celebration, it might be a good idea to have some chocolate eggs to go with your refreshments. Ask the group: "What is the best news you've ever been given?" Encourage them to discuss these moments. Alternatively, you could ask them: "What's the best news you could ever be given?" Enjoy their responses, whether humorous or sincere.

**+ INTRO ACTIVITY**



**You will need: newspaper front pages; paper; pens and pencils**

Show the group your examples of newspaper front pages. Point out the headlines and stories, and discuss their tone. Explain that you'll be talking about good news today, and ask the group to design their own good news front pages. Give them a sheet of paper and pens, and encourage them to let their imaginations loose. Give them five or ten minutes (depending on how much time you have with the group) and then ask them to share their newspapers with each other.

**+ BIBLE EXPLORATION**



**You will need: Bibles; large sheet of paper; marker pens**

Ask the group if they've heard people talk about the 'good news' as a Christian term? This is the original moment where the good news was first discovered!

Go through the story and ask the group to write down on a large piece of paper the different characters mentioned in the story. Then talk about their perspectives on the story. How do they think they'd tell the story from their point of view? Give the group various coloured pens and get them to think about how the people written about must have felt at different points in the story. Ask the group to write down any words they might use to describe how they felt. Go through the words they wrote and discuss them. Let this lead you into your group chat.

If you have a large group, break into pairs or threes for the next activity.

**+ CHATTING TOGETHER**



Discuss the following questions. Allow them to be imaginative and explorative with their discussion.

- What do you think it was that made Mary recognise Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus revealed himself in the way he did?
- What did it mean for the disciples to know that Jesus was alive again?
- What does it mean for us that Jesus rose again?

**+ CREATIVE RESPONSE**



**You will need: glass jars; grey paper; scissors; PVA glue; tea lights**

This passage covers a defining moment for Christians and what we believe. It describes the moment when everything feels lost and ruined. The very worst thing that could happen has happened: God came to earth as a person and died. And then everything turns around as Jesus' friends realise he's alive again. Everything is different, and everything is possible! It's the critical moment where Jesus shows that death is no longer the end of the story; that God performs the miraculous when it feels as though all hope is lost.

Sometimes it's important for us to remember the hope of the resurrection. We have times where we hear about

things that sound hopeless, or we go through our own difficulties, and that's when it's really helpful to remember that Jesus rose again.

To make your own reminders of the resurrection, give each member of the group a glass jar and a strip of grey paper. Wrap the paper around the outside of the jar, but cut the paper to look like a cave with the opening of a tomb. Paste it on with PVA glue. Give each young person a tea light and explain that when the disciples went to the tomb they were expecting to see Jesus' body, but instead they found unimaginable hope and light.

They can take their jars with lights in away, so that when they need hope they can remember the resurrection and light the tea light so the light shines out of what seemed to be a particularly hopeless situation.

**+ PRAYER**



**You will need: pebbles; permanent marker pens**

Give out the pebbles and pens. These stones represent the stone that was rolled away from the tomb. Explain that you're going to build a cairn with these stones, and that a cairn is a mound of stones people have built to remember something, though typically somewhere outside in nature! (You could take the group somewhere outside on the grounds if there is a good place to build the cairn outside.)

Ask the group to consider what Jesus being risen means to us. As they do so, get them to write these ideas on their stones (maybe just one word that sums it up) and place them on the cairn. They can use many stones for different ideas. If you're inside, you can play some music while you place the stones on the cairn. If not, encourage an atmosphere of prayerful reverence.

At the end of building the cairn, say a prayer of thanks, and ask that God would continue to remind us of the hope of the resurrection when we need it most.

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