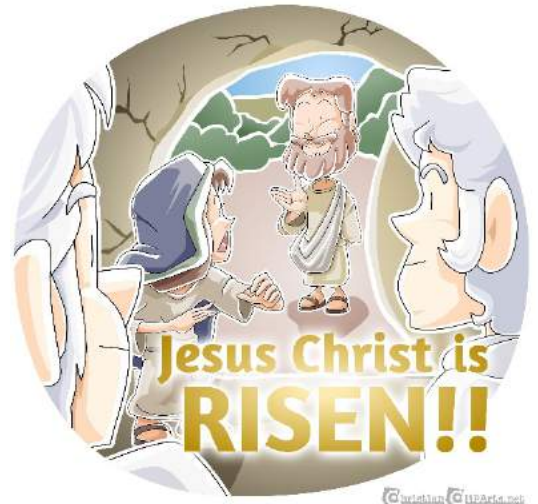


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# “The Tomb was Empty”

## Home Sunday School Lesson on John 20:1-18

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The Church is Empty...So was the Tomb!

“In Home” Sunday School Suggestions to Celebrate Easter

Easter will look a little different this year. There won't be choral presentations, sanctuaries full of lilies, or dozens of bonnets. There won't be hunts for eggs on the church lawn or pancake breakfast fundraisers between services. Is Easter cancelled? Of course not! If anything, this is all the more a time when we should celebrate and rejoice in the risen Lord. Christ is risen. The location of our worship does not alter that! Easter reminds us of the hope we have in God. He is our refuge and strength, and He faithfully fulfills His promises. So here are a few ideas to consider while planning how best to prepare for, explore, and celebrate the Easter holiday. He is risen! Hallelujah!

**Lesson focus:** Easter reminds us that we have been redeemed by Jesus, and given new life through Him. Because of that, we have hope for now and for the future, and we can share that hope with one another.

And what does redemption mean? How can or should we communicate this with youngsters? Children are able to understand this concept, if broken down into simple terms. Provide an analogy of some sort. For example, if Charlie was caught doing something wrong, he might get put in jail, with a price needed to be released. If Liam worked hard to raise funds and pay the price, he could redeem Charlie and get him out of jail. That's what Jesus did for us! Our sins made it so that we should pay the price of death, but Jesus payed that price to redeem us and allow us to go to Heaven with Him someday.

**Passage:** John 20:1-18; Matthew 28:1-10 (all Gospels contain the story of Christ's resurrection, but for this lesson we will focus on John's account.)

**Target Audience:** Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade (or whoever you might have at home!)

**Materials Needed:** Plastic Easter eggs, decorating supplies, popsicle sticks, cupcake liners, paper plates, brad fasteners, glue, scissors, crescent rolls, marshmallows, fruit slices (all optional, depending which activities you choose to use).



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# Games & Lesson Introduction

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**Lesson Opening:** Easter is already a wonderful time to celebrate and do things with family. If the crew in your house is small, activity choices may seem less exciting than a church-wide egg hunt or choir sing...but you can still have fun and take joy in the resurrection! To get started, select from one of the following openers, or make up one of your own!

- Watch an Easter video. Make this age appropriate, of course: young children will enjoy VeggieTales, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, or simple Bible story songs and clips. Older students might watch segments from movies like *The Gospel of John*.
- Have a hunt for “Resurrection Eggs.” Fill eggs with special items representing components of the Passion story.
- Act out the story. Have fun creating a skit or puppet show, taking the roles of Mary, Peter, John, and the angels.
- Discuss the concept of New Life in Christ. Connect with something in the animal world, such as eggs, life cycles, or butterflies.
- Make a fun Easter snack, like rainbow-colored fruit designs or “resurrection rolls”: wrap crescent dough around marshmallows, and dip in cinnamon sugar before baking. The marshmallows will disappear and the rolls will be left empty, just like the tomb of Jesus!
- Celebrate with song, an in-home dance party, or extra arts and crafts.

After a couple of fun activities, launch into investigation of the glory of Easter. Reach back to remember the events of Holy Week and the sadness of Christ’s death.

**Ask:** How would you feel if you were one of the disciples? Has there ever been a time that you felt very sad or disappointed?



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# The Empty Tomb “John 20:1-18” Kids’ Bible Lesson for Easter

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As always, how you choose to experience the story will vary according to the ages and abilities of your children (and how many are participating). For younger children, you may wish to use a children’s or storybook version of the Bible, and explain details as you go. Older kids can take turns helping to read the story. You can also make this interactive, and encourage everyone to get in on the action. You might find a short video version to reinforce it. Or even have students draw as you go...it’s all up to the kids and their learning styles.

\*Note: it might be fun to read all of the Gospel accounts, and compare the events. Take a “tour” of each version and note what different authors emphasize.

*Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup>So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” –John 20:1-2*

Explain a little of what might be going on here. When Joseph and Nicodemus took Jesus down from the cross, they were in a hurry to bury Him, since it was almost the Sabbath. Mary wanted to finish the job of anointing the body. When she arrived, she found the tomb empty. In distress, Mary panicked, thinking the body might have been stolen. She hurried to find the disciples for help.

*So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup>Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, <sup>7</sup>and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’<sup>[a]</sup> head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup>for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples went back to their homes. –John 20:3-10*



What did it mean that the cloths wrapping Jesus were in the tomb, and His body was not? These cloth wrappings would not have been easy to strip off. The fact that they were just sitting there in the tomb, with the body evaporated out of them, was significant. Peter and John seem to understand, in some way, what that indicated, or at least John believed. When they left, Mary was still there, apparently too distraught to understand or even take in what was going on. Her last moments with her Lord, and she couldn't even find His body!

*But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. <sup>12</sup>And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." -John 20:11-13*

The absence of the body is still all that Mary can think about. It seems like she hardly even realizes that she's talking with angels. Maybe her tears blurred her vision...maybe her sadness was just too great. All of her hope seemed to be lost.

**\*Ask:** Has there ever been a time that you felt so sad, you didn't know what would make you happy again?

*Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, <sup>[b]</sup> "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her. -John 20:14-18*

Again, Mary has trouble recognizing what is before her. At first, she thinks Jesus is the gardener. Maybe the body Jesus had after the Resurrection looked different than it had before. When He says her name, though, Mary understands who is speaking. Her Lord, her teacher, her Messiah. Imagine that deep sorrow, suddenly transformed into joy, realizing that His body wasn't missing—it was made new! Mary would have stayed there clinging to Christ, but He warned her that was not her role. She was to go tell others what she had seen. She must have been full of excitement to share the good news!



Are we excited? Regardless of how we celebrate, we can still be glad that Jesus has risen. Because of that, we don't have to fear the future. Our earthly bodies will pass away, but that's not the end for us. We will gain Heaven and Eternal life, because of Jesus. That gives us Easter hope every day. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

**Crafts:** Empty Tomb, Spring bouquet, Easter Buddies

**Extra ideas:** Resurrection Eggs





This lesson was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May

2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

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# Craft one: “Easter Flower Garden”

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## You will need:

- Scissors
- Construction paper (any color)
- Markers or decorating materials
- Glue or tape
- Popsicle sticks
- Cupcake liners and/or coffee filters
- Small cups or pots
- Pipe cleaners (optional decoration)



## Procedure:

1. Use cupcake liners, coffee filters, and construction paper to create flower designs.
2. Add colorful decorations, if desired.
3. Attach the “flowers” to popsicle sticks or pipe cleaners.
4. Carefully place the “flowers” in cup or pot.
5. Add stickers or captions to the outside of the cup.



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# Craft Two: “Easter Buddies”

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## You will need:

- Construction Paper or tissue paper
- Glue, tape, or staples
- Google eyes or pom-poms (optional)
- Scissors
- Pipe cleaners or string
- Plastic Easter eggs
- Permanent markers



## Procedure:

1. Choose an animal theme for your “buddy.”
2. Place pipe cleaners through small holes in the Easter egg, creating “ears,” “feet,” or other parts of the animal.
3. Cut a paper, cardstock, or felt piece to add extra fun flair to the animal.
4. Glue or draw eyes and facial features.
5. Place the “animal” in a paper or cup for extra stability, if desired.





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# Craft Three: “Empty Tomb”

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## You will need:

- Paper plates or paper
- Popsicle sticks
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Brad fasteners



## Procedure:

1. Cut the plate in half, or cut the bottom off of it to make an arch shape.
2. Decorate the plate with “stone” colors and additional pictures as desired.
3. Cut an upside down “U” shape out of the bottom of the plate to create a stone “door.”
4. Carefully attach the “stone” to the “tomb” by poking the brad fastener through the door and the plate (it may be helpful to poke a hole in the plates first, to allow the fastener through).
5. Glue the popsicle sticks into the shape of a cross, and attach it to the side of the plate.
6. Add a verse, caption, or handwritten note on the tomb to celebrate that Christ is risen!





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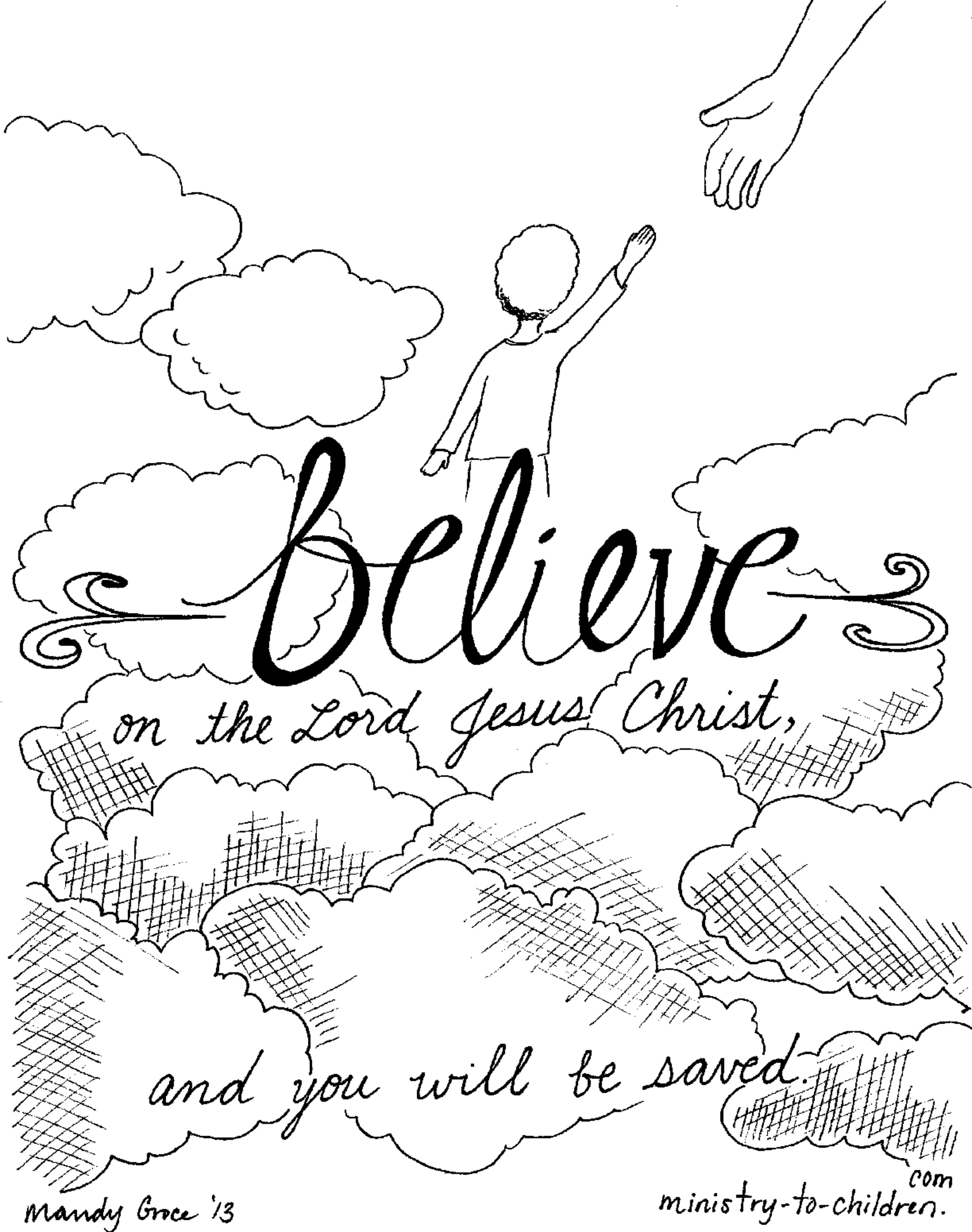
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*Believe*

*on the Lord Jesus Christ,*

*and you will be saved.*



He is Risen!

He is Risen, Indeed!

Happy  
Easter



Death is Defeated

Happy Easter!

+++

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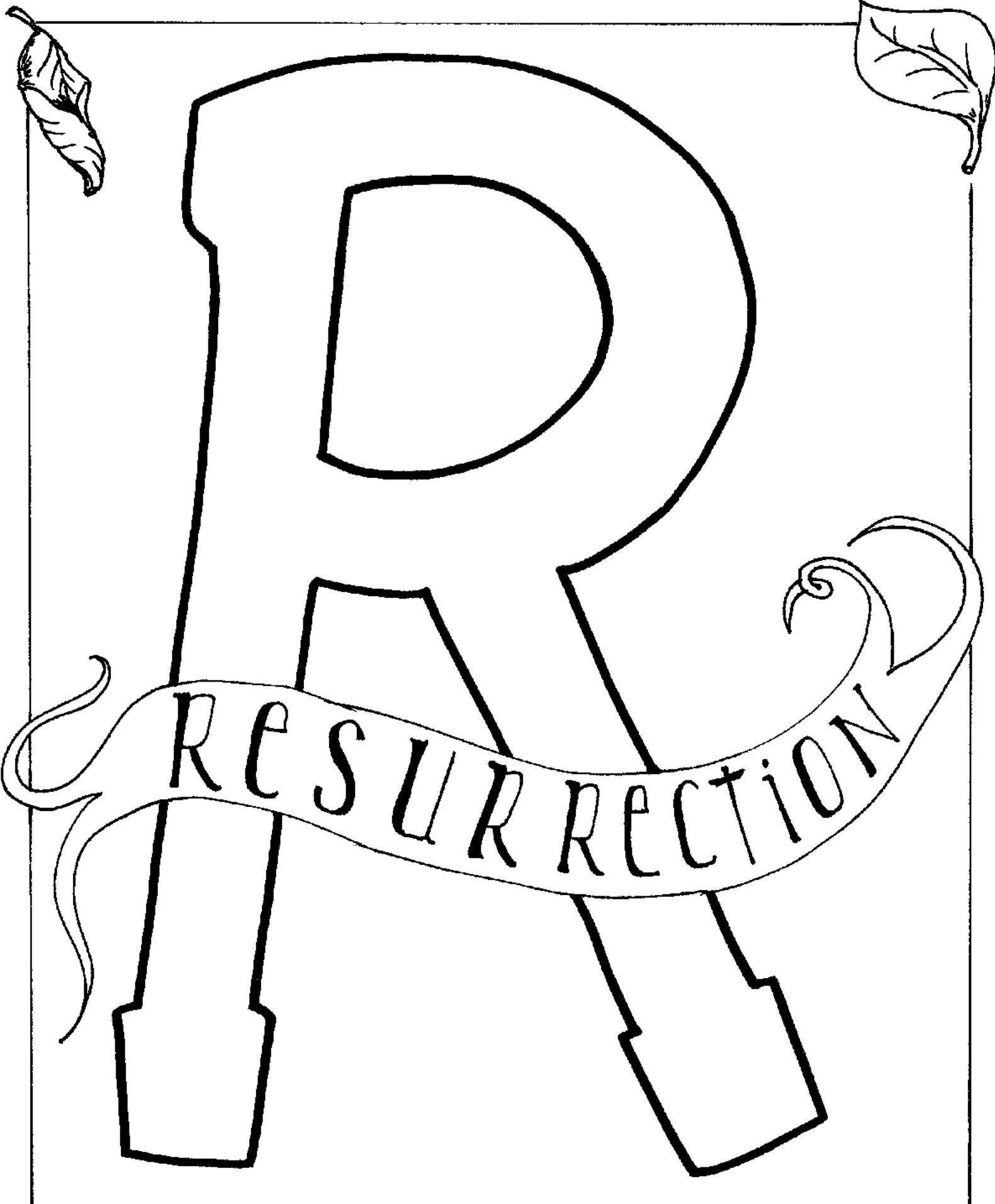
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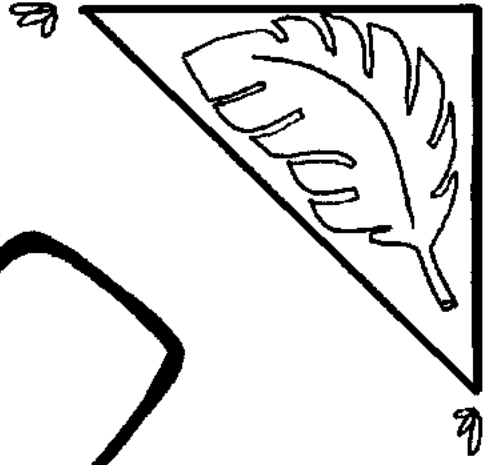


the Resurrection

Matthew 28







is  
for

Savior

