

Jesus: Revealing the Big Picture

Luke 24:36-48 NIV

Bible Lesson & Activities for Children



THE **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STORE

The Missing Puzzle Piece



The “Sunday School answer” is stereotypically Jesus, but the truth is that He is at the center of all things, in the Bible and in our lives. This lesson uses puzzles and pictures to demonstrate how we can step back and see the “big picture” significance of Christ. After His resurrection, Jesus came to His disciples and opened their eyes to understand that everything in Scripture and history led up to Him. Help children see how the Messiah is the “big picture answer” to our questions. He is the “missing piece” that satisfies and guides all things!

What’s the big idea? Sometimes we have a tendency to get caught up in smaller details and miss out on a broad scope of things. Sometimes we don’t understand the “big picture” God has for us, whether because of our own distraction or because God’s plans aren’t fully revealed. Stepping back helps us to see how essential the Resurrection is to our faith. Jesus lived, died, and rose for us! All Old Testament prophecies and events lead up to Him, and all New Testament events spread His story. Jesus is always with us and will help us to understand when we lose our way.

Passage: Luke 24:36-48

Target Audience: Kindergarten–6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper; watercolors; glue; markers or crayons; tape; scissors; decorative supplies; Goldfish crackers or Swedish fish; jigsaw puzzles; Bibles.

More Resources Online

- Watch the [video demonstration of the object lesson](#).
- Watch the [video example for the craft projects](#).
- Watch the [video Bible story “The Story of Easter”](#) from Saddleback Kids Club
- Watch the [video Bible story “Jesus is Alive”](#) from Crossroads Kids
- For more free illustrations, visit [Christian Clip Arts](#) and [Ministry-To-Children](#)

Object Lesson (5 minutes)

Greet the children and display part of a picture. This example uses a jigsaw puzzle to convey the message. You could also use a picture that is "zoomed in" to make it harder to see, or a picture with a component missing.

Hello, children of God!

Do you know what this is? *Hold up puzzle piece.* Well, yes, it's a puzzle piece. But what is the picture that it goes with? Do you know what picture this makes? *Hold up another piece.*

How about now? Do you know what it is now? Maybe you need a little more help. *Hold up the rest of the puzzle or picture, and place the piece in where it is missing.* Aha! Now we can see the whole picture. Sometimes it's hard when we only look at a small piece at a time. We need to step back and look at things as a whole to get an idea of the big picture. Sometimes our lives are like this. We get caught up on details and don't realize what's most important. Or sometimes we don't understand because God doesn't reveal things to us all the way right away. He might have a plan that we don't recognize until later.

This happened in the Bible, too. When Jesus was on Earth, people didn't always recognize that He was the one they had been waiting for, the one who would save them all. In fact, His disciples didn't always understand this. After Jesus died and came back to life, He appeared to His disciples. At first, they were worried, thinking He was a ghost. But He proved that it was really and truly Him. Then He explained to them how He was the fulfillment of the promises in God's Word. He was the missing puzzle piece! He opened their minds to understand and to see how God had provided through His son. He was explaining all of this to His closest companions and charging them to share that amazing truth with the rest of the world. They understood that God's promises were kept and His plans were brought to reality in Jesus.

This is important for us, too. Of course, we now know who Jesus was and what He did for us. He is at the center of all the stories of the Bible. Everything speaks of Him and points to Him, and He is the missing “puzzle piece” to all things, including our lives. He continues to be present with us and help us now, too!

And we see that God has a plan for us. There are times when we feel like we only see part of the puzzle. We might only have one piece at a time and don’t see the entire picture revealed. That’s okay. Because of Jesus, we know that we can trust in the Lord and in His plans for us. Even if we don’t know what those are, even if we don’t recognize the “big picture,” we can rest assured that His plans are good and that His promises will be kept. We might not get the full “reveal” in the timeline we prefer, but we will eventually understand all that God is doing. While we wait, we know that we have hope in Jesus and His care. God can and will provide for us. He gave His son to die because of His great love. No matter what we face, He is the center, the answer, and the “missing piece” in our lives!

Prayer: (Invite the children to repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for always being present with us.

Thank you for having a plan for the future.

Help us to trust in you,

Even when we don’t understand your ways.

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Game & Activities Suggestions

(10 minutes)



This passage features an appearance of Jesus in which He reveals to His disciples how Scripture all points to Him as the Messiah and savior. We, too, can recognize that God has a “big picture” plan for our lives, and Jesus is at the center of it! Kick things off with a thought-provoking activity based on this theme. Some possible ideas include:

- What’s the picture? Split students into groups and provide each group with a jigsaw puzzle (of age-appropriate difficulty). Have them race to put the puzzles together.

*Variations (for older students): Do not provide the picture showing what the puzzle will be in the end! Or provide a picture, but blindfold the person who is assembling the puzzle, and have the others describe where to place things.

- What am I looking at? Provide students with several pictures of things, viewed in a close-up format. Invite them to guess what the picture is, just from the zoomed-in view.
- “Revealing the Disguised”: Show images of famous stars or well-known individuals (maybe even people in the congregation), but at various stages in life. Invite students to guess who they are in “less recognizable” form.
- Fish fry relay: In honor of the broiled fish that Jesus was given, have students race to grab and eat “fish.” Use goldfish crackers or Swedish fish, and have students take turns racing across a play area to grab a fish and bring it to the next person in line, who will eat it and do the same for the next student. See which line can finish running and eating the fish in their bowl the fastest.
- Jesus is the answer! As time allows (best for older students), review some Old Testament stories and consider how they point to Christ. Remind children that He is the central figure of all Scripture, and should be the ruler of our hearts and lives, too!

Explain that this lesson looks at how Jesus is the answer to the “big picture” of Biblical prophecies and stories. He revealed Himself to His disciples by opening Scripture, and continues to reveal Himself today through God’s Word.

Main Bible Teaching (15 minutes)



This passage features a special appearance that Jesus made after His resurrection, in which He fully revealed who He was to His disciples. It's a shorter passage that could be combined with other parts of the chapter, such as the Road to Emmaus meeting. It can be acted out, if desired, to make things more interactive. You might also have students take turns reading these verses, or read them out loud and pause to explain what is being said.

Luke 24:36-39 NIV *While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." (37) They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. (38) He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? (39) Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."*

If this story is not being read in conjunction with previous parts of the chapter, you may need to set some context. Directly preceding this passage, Jesus appeared to a couple disciples on the road to Emmaus. He was at first not recognized by them, but after explaining Scripture, He revealed Himself. The disciples, upon realizing who they had just seen, were so excited that they went back to Jerusalem to tell the others. This is what they were "talking about" in verse 36, when Jesus appeared to them. Interestingly enough, though, even though they were hearing that news from those who had seen Jesus, they were still scared when He appeared. They thought it was a ghost who was standing among them. Jesus had to reassure them and show that it was Him, live and in person and in the flesh. He had to prove that He was alive and not merely a spirit.

Ask: If you had doubts about something, what would be good proof or reassurance for you?

Luke 24:40-43 NIV *When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. (41) And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" (42) They gave him a piece of broiled fish, (43) and he took it and ate it in their presence.*

This was the double (or triple) proof that Jesus was alive, not a ghost but a fully resurrected body, physically and spiritually real. Not only did He show them His parts, but asked for food. Ghosts typically do not eat fish sticks. He wanted to demonstrate that He was alive. Of course, if the disciples had been listening to what He said during His ministry years, they should easily have understood that He was merely fulfilling what He'd promised. But it took a little more explanation for that to sink in.

Ask: Why is it so important that Jesus was fully there in bodily form? (The Resurrection is what gives us life and fulfills God's promises and prophecies!)

Luke 24:44-48 NIV *He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." (45) Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. (46) He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, (47) and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (48) You are witnesses of these things.*

Jesus reminded the disciples of the things that had been spoken and predicted about Himself. He "opened their minds", reminding them of the words of the Bible that had talked about who the Messiah would be and what He would do. He helped them to understand

that all of those predictions were describing Him! He was the “puzzle piece” that all things centered around. He also gave the disciples an important task. As eyewitnesses, they were to proclaim the news of Jesus to everyone else, starting in Jerusalem and going to “all nations” from there. We are also to share His message to all around us, proclaiming His name and helping others understand who He was and what He did for us.

Ask: Although we haven’t seen Jesus with our physical sight, how do we know that He died and rose again? How can we trust that the Bible is God’s Word?

God loves us and cares for us enough to send His Son. Jesus lived and died for us. He revealed Himself to people after the Resurrection. We didn’t get to see Him at that point, but we know the Bible is God’s Holy word and we trust what it says. We can give thanks for Jesus and do our best to point other people to Him as savior and guide.

Craft Activities (15 minutes)

“The answer is Jesus” isn’t just a Sunday School cliché! Jesus truly is the central figure in all of the Bible, and should be the central figure in our lives, as well. He revealed to His disciples who He was. He guides us to understand it, as well. These crafts aim to remind children of how Jesus is revealed as the “big picture” in Scripture. A “Stretching illustration” shows how the picture is often revealed one piece at a time. A “Magic Watercolor” shows how things can be gradually revealed.

Craft one: "Stretching Illustration"

You will need:

- Construction paper or cardstock
- Markers or crayons
- Tape or glue
- Scissors
- Pipe cleaner or string (optional)



Procedure:

1. If desired, cut paper or cardstock into smaller strips and glue or tape together to create one long piece of paper.
2. Fold the paper into 3 or 4 (or more) sections.
3. Draw a large picture, placing one part of the big picture on each section of the longer paper.
4. Add verses or captions.
5. As desired, add a string to hang the final piece. Fold and reveal one piece at a time to gradually show the "big picture."



Craft Two: "Magic Watercolor"

You will need:

- Paper (white preferred)
- Crayons (including white or light colors)
- Watercolor paints and brush
- Markers (optional)



Procedure:

1. Make a picture on a white paper using crayons, ideally lighter colors.
2. Add verses or captions on the same paper or attach from another paper (markers can be used for this, if desired).
3. Using watercolor, paint over the crayon images to "reveal" the picture hidden by the white paper.
4. If desired, attach a hanger to display and recall how Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples.



Craft Three: "Big Picture" Puzzle

You will need:

- Paper plate
- Crayons or markers
- Scissors
- Envelope or ziploc (optional for storage)



Procedure:

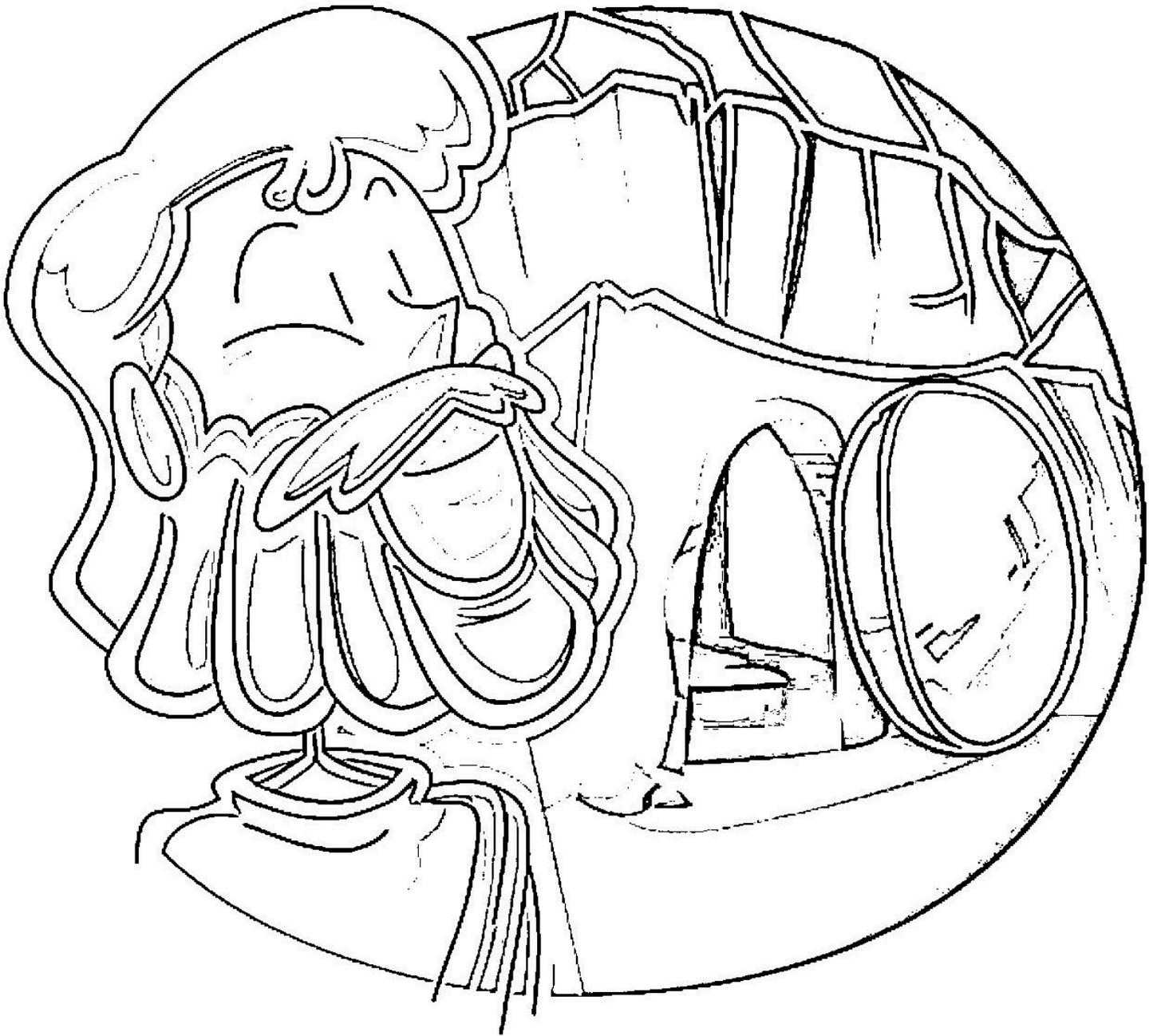
1. Draw a picture on the paper plate.
2. Add verses, captions, or additional decorations as desired.
3. Cut the plate into pieces like a jigsaw puzzle. Option: draw lines indicating the pieces prior to cutting. For younger students, make shapes very simple, and for older children cut in more complex sizes and shapes.
4. Scramble the pieces and rearrange into the picture! Store in an envelope or bag if desired.



Luke 24:45 NIV

Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.





Word Search Puzzle

Disciples - Jesus - Peace - Flesh - Bones - Fish

Revealing - Words - Scriptures - Psalms - Moses - Prophets

S	Z	L	X	G	F	P	V	N	S	B	O
X	D	P	D	M	W	J	R	H	I	D	O
B	D	E	D	R	J	P	S	A	L	M	S
H	I	A	D	H	T	B	R	V	R	O	S
S	S	C	R	I	P	T	U	R	E	S	E
R	C	E	Z	N	R	I	W	Y	V	E	B
U	I	Y	L	I	O	B	O	N	E	S	Y
M	P	P	X	T	P	S	R	A	A	S	P
L	L	F	I	S	H	K	D	T	L	P	V
J	E	S	U	S	E	H	S	R	I	G	Y
A	S	W	C	K	T	L	I	F	N	J	E
Y	K	F	L	E	S	H	B	U	G	D	R

Word Search Answers

S	Z	L	X	G	F	P	V	N	S	B	O
X	D	P	D	M	W	J	R	H	I	D	O
B	D	E	D	R	J	P	S	A	L	M	S
H	I	A	D	H	T	B	R	V	R	O	S
S	S	C	R	I	P	T	U	R	E	S	E
R	C	E	Z	N	R	I	W	Y	V	E	B
U	I	Y	L	I	O	B	O	N	E	S	Y
M	P	P	X	T	P	S	R	A	A	S	P
L	L	F	I	S	H	K	D	T	L	P	V
J	E	S	U	S	E	H	S	R	I	G	Y
A	S	W	C	K	T	L	I	F	N	J	E
Y	K	F	L	E	S	H	B	U	G	D	R