

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read Matthew 28 aloud. You might read shorter sections, then discuss each paragraph. Or you might ask the group to imagine that they are different characters in the story (women, soldiers, Jews, disciples, Jesus) and describe how that person might have felt.

1. Why do you suppose the women went to the tomb?
Probably for the same reasons we visit cemeteries.

Why do you think they went early in the morning?
Their first opportunity. Jesus died Friday, and they rested on the Sabbath.

What do you do when you cannot sleep?

2. What happened when the two women went to the tomb?

Who rolled away the stone? What happened to the guards?

How is this like the way God removes obstacles for us?

3. What did the angel say to the women?
Don't be afraid. See the empty tomb. Go and tell.

What did Jesus say when he saw the women?
Don't be afraid. Go and tell.

How are these instructions similar to what God tells us?

4. Why do you think Matthew included the account of the soldiers?
Matthew's first readers were probably Christians facing Jewish opposition. It shows that the Jews had resisted from day one. Perhaps his readers had heard this report from Jewish critics.

Why was it so hard for the Jews to believe the resurrection story?
Come on! Dead men don't walk! It's too troubling to be true.

5. What happened when the disciples saw Jesus (16)?

Why would some of the disciples doubt (17)?
Come on! Dead men don't walk! It's too good to be true.

6. How did Jesus' resurrection validate his authority?

Since Jesus had all authority, what did he call his disciples to do?
Go make disciples.

How do you “make a disciple”? What is a disciple?
Someone engaged in an active learning process.

How does attending church relate to being a disciple?

How do baptism and learning to obey relate to discipleship?
Baptism is the initial commitment, followed by a lifetime of learning.

7. What promise did Jesus leave with his disciples?

How does Matt. 28:20 connect with Matt. 1:23?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

In what ways do you see yourself as a disciple?

- Not sure what it means to be a disciple.
- Disciple sounds like an ancient term – does it still apply?
- I go to church, but haven't thought much about discipleship.
- I am working on it.
- I would like to learn about growing as a disciple.

Resources

Bible notes

The date of Easter shifts because it is linked with the Jewish lunar calendar. Jesus died on Friday of Passover weekend, and Passover is linked to the first full moon of Spring. That's why most Christians celebrate Easter on the Sunday after the first full moon that follows March 21.

Prayer ideas

Pray for revival – in our group, our church, and around the world!

Ask God to help us grow as disciples.

Pray for someone who needs to become a disciple.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Decorate Easter eggs as a group or ask the kids to bring eggs to group.

How is an egg like a tomb? How does it symbolize new life?
It looks dead, like a rock. But inside, it either contains new life, or else it is a source of nourishment.

Read Matthew 28:1-10 aloud.

What happened when the two Mary's went to the tomb of Jesus?

How do you think they felt?

What is a situation that makes you feel worried or sad?

If God can raise someone from the dead, which of your problems are too big for God to solve?

Offer a prayer of thanks & praise. Then eat the eggs!



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LIFE Group Guide

Matthew 28 – The resurrection

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **Jesus' resurrection created a call to discipleship.**

The resurrection of Jesus validates the Christian message like no other evidence. All the Jews or Romans had to do to defeat Christianity was to produce the body of Jesus, but they never did because they could not. This guide connects the resurrection to our daily discipleship.

As always, keep your eyes open for guests who might enjoy attending your group. We will have a bunch of guests on Easter Sunday.

Leadership tip: Bring this guide to worship and take notes during the sermon. The sermon and the LIFE group come from the same text. Even if the texts are different, there will be good ideas from the sermon that you might bring out during group meeting.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

❖ What is your favorite Easter candy?

❖ Where were you on September 11, 2001?

That event was a lot like the death & resurrection of Jesus for his first followers.

❖ Sing or play resurrection songs – Up from the Grave, My Savior Lives, Because He Lives, Jesus is Lord.