

The Mystery of the Resurrection

Scripture Text: John 20:1-20, Romans 8:11

Memory Verse: “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” (I Corinthians 15:51).

Lesson Aim: The Holy Ghost is the resurrection power that changes us.

Supplies

- printout of photos from “Crusade Photo” file ([go to Lesson directory on Resource CD](#))
- transparencies and overhead projector (optional)
- white board and markers
- offering plates (one per team)
- timer or watch with second hand
- black trench coat and hat, large magnifying glass
- clipboard, pencil, copy of Detective Dick Dunsmore’s part
- printout of “Private Eye Name Tags” from the CD file
- Avery #5260 self-sticking mailing labels (1 per child) ([go to Lesson directory on Resource CD](#))
- posterboard and marker (or transparency and overhead)
- skein of red yarn, slips of paper, pen

Before the Session

• Print out the photos of the Sunday school children’s crusades from the file “Crusade Photos.” If your group is large, copy these onto transparencies, and use an overhead projector to show the photos. Teachers with a computer in the classroom can simply show the photos on the monitor.

• Early in the week give a copy of Detective Dick Dunsmore’s part to the man chosen to play this role. Wearing a black trench coat and hat, he carries a large magnifying glass, clipboard, and pen. He does not have to memorize his part, which he has on the clipboard. But he should be familiar enough with it that he does not read it. Encourage him to ad lib, fitting the role to his personality.

- From the file “Private Eye Name Tags” print out a page of name tags. Use this as the master for copying onto self-sticking 1.5” x 2.5” mailing labels. Make a nametag for each child, the teacher, and Detective Dick.

- Write the memory verse on a poster or transparency to resemble a vision chart.

The Holy Ghost

is the

resurrection

power

that

changes

us.

- Write this rhyme on a slip of paper and hide it in your shoe.

The seventh book in the Testament New,

Is where this clue is leading you.

Three times five is the chapter you need.

Find it now. Do it with speed.

Take the chapter number and turn it around,

Hooray for you! The key verse you’ve found.

- Write each of these references on a slip of paper: John 20:1; John 20:2; John 20:5-7; John 20:11-13; John 20:14-16; John 20:19-20. Attach the paper containing last reference (John 20:19-20) to the end of a skein of red yarn. Measure off 15 to 20 feet of yarn (depending on the size of the room), and tie the next reference there. Continue spacing the references several feet apart, ending with the first reference. String the yarn around the room, hiding the slips of paper under tables, in corners, on windowsills, etc. Place the skein at the front near the teaching area.

Detective Dunsmore and his assistants will follow the yarn to find the clues.

- Study John 1:1-20 until you have a clear picture of the events. Be prepared to tell the story in

your words to be sure that the children understand what happened.

Welcome

Open with prayer.

Welcome everyone and recognize the guests. Let those who brought guests introduce them.

With invisible chalk draw an imaginary line, separating the class into two groups. Sing this round to the tune of “Row Your Boat.”

Jesus is alive. Jesus is alive.

I’m glad, so glad, Jesus is alive.

As the chorus is ending, Detective Dick Dunsmore enters.

DETECTIVE: **Good morning! Good morning** Points thumb at himself. **The famous Detective Dick Dunsmore here!** Points at eye. **Private Eye Dunsmore, that’s me, you see. I have “Dunsmore” cases than anyone else with the firm of Dunsmore Private Investigators. In fact, I am the only one in the firm.**

Peers at the clipboard, turning it several directions and using the magnifying glass, before getting it right side up. **What have we here? “The Case of the Missing Corpse.” Corpse? Corpse? Oh, now I get it. A corpse is a dead body. Hhmm . . . sounds like a dead-end case to me, sure to end up in a cemetery somewhere.**

But, pardon me, I am interrupting your class. I’ll just sit down and study this case. Scratches head. **Looks pretty dead to me, but maybe I can think of something to put a little life into it. Just go ahead with your class. Don’t pay any attention to me.**

Detective takes a seat to one side.

Sing unto the Lord

“God’s Not Dead” (recorded on “Search ‘n Rescue”—*kids POWER hour* tape)

“I’ve Got New Life in Jesus” (recorded on “Kids: God’s Masterpiece”—*kids POWER hour* tape)

The following is sung to the tune of the spiritual “Mamma’s Little Baby Loves Shortenin’ Bread”:

All God's children love the Holy Ghost.

All God's children love the Holy Ghost. (2 x's)

Lift up your hands. Shout out loud.

(Raise hands. Cup hands around mouth and shout.)

All God's children love the Holy Ghost.

Repeat the chorus several times, lowering the volume each time on all lines except "shout out loud." This line is always shouted. By the fourth time through, the children should be whispering everything except, "shout out loud." The contrast is startling, and the children love it. Usually we encourage them to "sing louder." This time we ask them to sing softer, and it gets their attention.

Energy Outlet: Dead or Alive?

Detective Dick jumps to his feet and comes to the front.

DETECTIVE: **Teacher! Teacher, pardon me for interrupting, but I just had this great idea.**

TEACHER: **And it is?**

DETECTIVE: Points at eye. **Well, you see. I am a private eye, investigating difficult cases that no other firm will even touch. But I have a little problem. I don't have any money to hire anyone to help me, and I really need help.**

TEACHER: **So?**

DETECTIVE: Points at eye. **So I see all these sharp kids who need something to do. To kids. Raise your hands if you would like to be my assistants. I'll give you on-the-job training, and you won't even have to pay for it.** Children raise their hands.

Great! Great! We'll start with "The Case of the Missing Corpse."

First, I need to give you a little three-part aptitude test. As private eyes, you will be looking for clues, and they are not always easy to find. You have to have sharp vision.

Displays the vision chart showing the lesson aim. **To show you how, I will take the test first.** Stands back from the chart and attempts to read it. **The Holy Ghost is the . . . uhhh . . . leans toward the chart . . . resurrection . . . uhhh . . .**

. Moves closer to the chart. **The Holy Ghost is the resurrection power . . . that . . . uhhh. This chart is blurry. Oh, well, you see how to do it.**

Returns to front beside the chart. **Now it is your turn. As I point to each word, you read it aloud together.**

Children read, **“The Holy Ghost is the resurrection power that changes us.”**

DETECTIVE: **Very good. You passed the first part of the test. Only two more tests to go.**

Private eyes have to know the difference between something that is dead and something that is alive. As I walk around the room, I will point at different things. If it is alive, jump up and shout, “Alive.” If it is dead, sit still and whisper, “Dead.” Got that?

Goes around the room pointing at various items such as a child, a picture, a doorknob, the light switch, a plant, a clock, himself. He argues with the children when they say the clock is dead. “But it works. It makes a sound. It moves. It has to be alive.” The children overrule him.

Very good. You know the difference between dead and alive. You passed the second part of the test.

While you continue with your class, I will get the third part of the test ready.

Detective Dunsmore takes a seat to one side. The teacher takes charge.

Prayer

Ask all who have a need for healing (for themselves or others) to stand in one area of the room, all who have a salvation request to stand in another area, and all who need help with a problem in another area.

Quote Philippians 4:19 to the class, having them repeat it after you. Lead in a corporate prayer of faith.

End with a praise break.

Offering: Save Your Change to Save Our Children

Save Our Children Offering

Start as early as possible to encourage the children to “save your change to save our children.” Ask them to put their change in a special jar or can labeled, “Save Our Children.” To motivate the children to save, make this a contest between the boys and girls, or between classes.

Hopefully, your church promotes the Sunday School department’s Save Our Children offering. If it has not been mentioned, ask your pastor or department superintendent for permission to promote this important drive.

Every Easter, Sunday schools around the world take a special offering called “Save Our Children.” The offering goes to pay for special projects like children’s crusades. Last year hundreds of children in foreign lands heard about Jesus and received the Holy Ghost at crusades paid for by the Save Our Children offerings.

Show the photos from the CD.

This year the theme is “Together for Him [Jesus] and them [the children].” Our offering will be added to offerings from around the world, “Together for Him and them.” Because we give, many children will have the opportunity to hear the true plan of salvation.

Call for an usher/usherette from each team to come to the front and hold their team’s offering plate. Tell the children that they have only *forty seconds* to give. When time is up, no more money will be accepted. If they want their team to win, they need to give and give quickly.

Play fast-paced, exciting music, as someone counts down in the background. The children race to the front to give. This is a wild unrestrained time. As the children give, call out challenges. “Give it all! Don’t hold back. Oops! It looks like the (boys) are giving the most. Girls, dig deeper.” (It is surprising how much money our children have tucked away. Get them caught up in the excitement of winning, and they will give every penny they have.)

When time is up, call, “Freeze.” The students will freeze immediately. After a brief pause, continue, “Sorry, but we cannot accept any more money. You may return to your seats now.”

The helpers take the offering into another room to count it. Ask them to return the totals so you can announce it before the Bible lesson.

Memory Work

Detective Dunsmore comes to the front.

DETECTIVE: **The last part of the aptitude test is to check your memory. Private eyes have to have sharp memories. Sometimes the littlest clue can become an important fact in the case. I am well known for my marvelous memory.**

To test your memories, you need to memorize the key verse. It is found in . . . scratches his head . . . in . . . in the Bible somewhere. Now where is that paper I wrote the key verse on?

Begins digging in his pockets. **I have it right here in my pock . . . Oh, dear, where is it?** Pulls pockets inside out.

Maybe I put it in my wallet. Searches wallet. **No.**

On the clipboard? It has got to be here. Flips through the papers. **No, not here either. I wish I could remember where. . . .**

Snaps fingers. **I know.** Begins pulling off his shoe. **It is in my shoe. I put it there so I wouldn't lose it. You know, private eyes have to be creative.** Pulls the slip of paper from his shoe.

The key verse is found in. . . . Peers closely at the paper. **Oh dear, it's another mystery. Let's see if you can figure it out.** Reads.

**The seventh book in the Testament New,
Is where this clue is leading you.**

Pauses for children to find I Corinthians, then continues.

Three times five is the chapter you need.

Find it now. Do it with speed.

After the children find chapter 15, he reads.

Take the chapter number and turn it around.

Children find verse 51.

Hooray for you! The key verse you've found.

Read together I Corinthians 15:51. **What? Another mystery? We are just going from mystery to mystery. Well, let's see if you can figure out this mystery. If you can, you will be hired to work with me on "The Case of the Missing Corpse."**

"We shall not all sleep." Does that mean some of us do not need to sleep? Is anybody here able to live without sleeping? No. So it means something else. Teacher, help us. What does this mean?

The teacher explains. **Not everyone will die (sleep), but everyone will be changed when Jesus comes. The dead believers will be changed when they are resurrected. The living saints will be changed when they are caught up in the Rapture. Both dead and living will get a new body.**

Lead the children in repeating the verse phrase by phrase until they know it.

DETECTIVE: **You are hired!** Gives each child a private eye sticker. **You are now an official member of the Dunsmore Private Investigators firm.**

I am going to study this case to decide what to do first.

Detective Dunsmore takes a seat.

Announce the totals of the offering. Emphasize that the team giving the most is the first winner, and the other team is the second winner. No one loses when we give to the Lord.

Bible Lesson

The Case of the Missing Corpse

Detective Dunsmore jumps to his feet and comes to the front.

DETECTIVE: **I've been studying the facts of this case, and I know what to do. We will follow the red trail.**

Now listen carefully, private eyes. Here are the facts.

Becomes very serious. **Jesus of Nazareth was nailed to a cross. He died a horrible death, suffering so we could be saved. He was not guilty of sin, but He took the punishment for my sin . . . and your sin.**

To be sure that He was dead, the Roman soldiers drove a spear into His side.

Then Jesus' secret followers, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, came and got His body off the cross. That's where the corpse comes into this case. They wrapped Him in grave clothes and buried Him in Joseph's new tomb, which is a cave-like grave. They rolled a huge stone in front of the tomb and went home.

Early on the morning of the third day, strange things started happening. First, there was an earthquake. There had been an earthquake when Jesus was crucified. Everybody just thought this latest earthquake was an aftershock.

Now it is time to follow the red trail. Calls a child to help him. They pick up the skein of yarn and start following it, rewinding the yarn as they go. When they come to the first slip of paper (clue), the assistant unties it and reads it to the class.

The teacher helps the students find John 20:1 and lets a volunteer read it to the class. The teacher paraphrases it to be sure the children understand.

DETECTIVE: Moves among the children and holds his magnifying glass over this verse in one child's Bible. **Ah-ha! Here is a clue that something strange is happening.**

What is it? If the children do not immediately pick up on the fact that stone was rolled away, he guides them to that conclusion.

The teacher writes on the board, "The stone was moved," and for the benefit of the smaller children, sketches a stone beside the mouth of the tomb.

After each clue is found, Detective Dunsmore chooses a different assistant to give more children the opportunity to participate. Volunteers read the verses. The teacher paraphrases and

fills in the time gaps so the story flows smoothly. The students, guided by Detective Dunsmore and his magnifying glass, uncover the clues. The teacher (or a student) writes and draws each clue on the board as it is discovered.

Clues are:

- (1) The stone was moved.
- (2) The tomb was empty.
- (3) The grave clothes were in the tomb.
- (4) Two angels were in the tomb.
- (5) Mary saw Jesus.
- (6) The wounds in Jesus' hands and side.

DETECTIVE: Points at the board. **We have all the clues. Now the question is, "Where is the missing corpse?"** Give the children a chance to respond.

The answer is, "There is no corpse." Why? Children respond.

A corpse is the body of a dead person. After the Resurrection, there was no corpse because Jesus was not dead. He was alive.

We cracked this case wide open. The Case of the Missing Corpse is no longer a mystery. Jesus Christ was dead, but He is alive forevermore.

Thanks, kids. You make super private eyes.

Detective Dunsmore takes a seat with the children.

Wrap Up

The teacher wraps up the lesson. **After the Resurrection, Jesus looked the same, but He had a new body. He could appear and disappear in an instant.**

As two of His followers were walking home talking about the Crucifixion, Jesus appeared to them. He walked and talked with them, but they did not recognize Him. When they arrived at their house, they invited Jesus to stay with them. As they sat down to eat, Jesus blessed the food, and then He disappeared—just like that. Snap your fingers.

Later, the disciples were in a room with the door shut. Suddenly, there was Jesus! Snap fingers. **He did not come in the door. He just appeared.**

A few weeks later, Jesus took His followers to a mountain. As He talked to them, His feet lifted from the ground, and He went up, up, up into the clouds and disappeared. Gravity had no power over Jesus' new body.

Imagine having a body like that! You could just think, "I wish I was on Mars," and you would be there. How can you get a body like the one Jesus had?

Read Romans 8:11. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Do you know what that Spirit is? It is the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God that dwelt in Jesus. When you receive the Holy Ghost, you are filled with God's Spirit and changed from a sinful person to a child of God.

When Jesus comes, if you have obeyed the plan of salvation, whether you are dead or alive, your body will be changed as Jesus' body was changed when He was resurrected. Death will lose its power. Gravity will lose its hold. In your new spiritual body, you will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

If Jesus should come today, are you ready? Have you repented of your sins, been baptized in Jesus' name, and been filled with His Spirit? Whether you are dead or alive, the Holy Ghost is the resurrection power that will change your body and lift you up to meet Jesus when He comes.

Give the children an opportunity to be filled with the Holy Ghost.