

### Tell the Story *(Don't just read it—know it and bring it to life!)*

In the weeks that followed Jesus' death, he appeared to his disciples many times and was seen by over 500 eyewitnesses. Quickly, the news about his resurrection spread throughout the land.

One of Jesus' disciples named Thomas said, "I won't believe he is alive unless I can put my fingers into the holes where his hands were nailed to the cross."

A few days later, Jesus appeared to his disciples and said to Thomas, "Put your fingers here—feel the hole in my hand. Put your hand into the wound on my side."

Thomas shouted, "It is you, Jesus—my God!"

Then Jesus said, "I will bless those even more who haven't seen, but still believe!"

Soon after that, Jesus met with his disciples over a meal. He said, "John baptized you in water, but in a few days you will be baptized with God's Spirit. This will give you power to live in my ways and tell the entire world about me."

Jesus commanded them, "Go! Make disciples all over the world. Teach them to walk in my ways and obey me. I am leaving now to be with my father in heaven, but you will never be alone. God's Spirit will come and live inside of you—giving you peace and leading you in all the ways of truth."

As the disciples watched, Jesus went up into the sky, disappearing in the clouds right in front of them!  
*(Pause)*

A few weeks later, a group of 120 of Jesus' followers gathered to pray together in Jerusalem. All of a sudden, they heard a loud sound—like a roaring windstorm—that filled the house where they were meeting. Each of them was filled with God's Spirit and started speaking in languages that were not their own! They went out into the street and began to tell people about the great things that Jesus had done.

At that time, Jews from all over the world were living in Jerusalem. This roaring sound was heard throughout the entire city, and a large crowd had gathered outside the house to see what was going on. When the people heard Jesus' followers speaking, they said, "How can this be? They're from Galilee, but they're speaking in our own languages. This is amazing!"

One of Jesus' disciples, named Peter, stepped forward to explain to the crowds what was happening. He said, "This is part of God's prophecy being fulfilled. We are eyewitnesses of the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead and is the true Messiah!"

Then Peter explained how Jesus had fulfilled everything the prophets said about the Messiah. He told the crowd, "Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God. In Jesus, you will find forgiveness—he is the final sacrifice everyone's sin. This is God's new covenant offered not just to the Jews, but for all who want to be part of God's family."

That day, thousands believed what Peter had said and turned from their sins to follow Jesus. They were baptized and became a part of God's family—once again empowered to live out God's promise to be a blessing to all people.

God's new covenant was not written on tablets of stone like before, but on the hearts and minds of his people, so they would always know how to live in his ways. These followers of Jesus were deeply committed to God and each other... sharing everything they had, praying, learning God's ways together, and helping anyone in need—all with great joy and generosity. Daily they ate together to honor and remember Jesus' life given for them. They saw God do amazing things through them—miracles and healing—as he added people to their group each day.

This was the beginning of what the Bible calls the Church—a community of people all over the world who, because of Jesus, once again enjoy a life that is full and complete—following in the ways of God. We can join this amazing story... the story can continue with us!

## Retell the Story

This may seem redundant, but it helps you remember and own the story.

## Dialogue

These questions are a good start to draw out observations about the story.

- **Do you think Jesus was really raised from the dead?**
- **What do you hear in this story that makes you believe Jesus rose from the dead?**
- **What was Jesus' command right before leaving his disciples? Is this command also for us today?**
- **What is a disciple?**
- **How do you make a disciple?**
- **What did Jesus say about God's Spirit?**
  - » God's Spirit will come and live inside of you - giving you peace and leading you in all the ways of truth.
- **What was the covenant God made with Abraham and his people? What did it require?**
- **How did God make a new covenant with his people? What is the new covenant?**

## Review All the Stories

ALLOW EXTRA TIME FOR THIS! Come up with a creative way for the group to give a brief overview of all of the stories.

## Dialogue

Think about all of the stories that we have heard together...

- **What have you learned from these stories? What amazes you?**
- **What common themes run through all of the stories?**
  - God wants us to live closely with him—listening and obeying.
  - He provides the best possible way of life for us to live.
  - God desires to rescue his creation and bring them back to himself.
  - He will go to amazing lengths to accomplish this.
  - Our sins require sacrifice—a life for a life.
- **How do all of these stories connect as one big story?**

- **If you had to tell the entire story... the whole story... what would you tell us?**
- **What have we learned about what God is like? Where have we seen that?**  
*(Make a list of these things)*
  - He does what is good, right, and perfect—he is holy.
  - He is powerful, creative, knows all things, has control over the elements, punishes rebellion, keeps his promises, does not allow evil to remain with him, provides a way of forgiveness, loves his creation, provides us with the best way to live, wants to protect us and bless us, wants us to continue his blessings, and much more!
- **How does this story continue (with us)?**

## Application (Optional questions that also work well in smaller groups)

- What questions do you have about the story? What do you wonder about?
- What will you remember most about the story?
- How does this story make a difference in your life?
- Where does your story fit into this entire Story of God?
- If you were to draw a symbol (an icon) for your life story, what would it look like?
- What does it mean for you to live in God's ways right now?

## Scripture Memory Verses

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28: 18-20

Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. John 20: 21

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1: 8