

We Celebrate Jesus

Easter: **Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life** (Mark 15:16–16:8)

Bible Point: We celebrate Jesus.

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son.” (John 3:16)

Purpose

Think back to when you were a child. How often did you want to read your favorite story? Was once enough? Or could your parent say it from memory due to its bedtime reoccurrence?

The Easter story is the greatest story ever told. It's the good news! And we can't tell it often enough. Get ready! You'll tell it again today!

Although it's *the* favorite, this story can be tough for young children. After all, death isn't easy to talk about. But even for kids, this is an important, true story of what our God did for us. Let's celebrate!

Prayer

God, thanks for giving us the gift of life and friendship with you. I celebrate your love today! In your name, amen.

Prep

Opening Options

- Option Cards*
- Craft Stick Butterflies*: tissue paper, craft sticks, glue sticks, Glue Dots, markers, child-safe scissors
- Egg Hunt*: plastic eggs, paper bags, markers, treats (*optional*)
-

Sing & Play

- Music CD**
- Music Video DVD**
- Buddy Video DVD**
- Olivia Bible Memory Buddy poster*
- media player
- Bible (bookmark John 3:16)

Bible Discovery & Goodbye Circle

- “Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life” Bible Story poster*
- Music CD**
- Olivia Bible Memory Buddy stickers* (1 per child)
- media player
- Bible (bookmark Mark 15:39; 16:5-6)

- sharpened pencils
- chairs
- dark-colored plastic tablecloths (1 for every 2 Crews)
- towels or sheets (1 for every 2 Crews)

Apply-It Options

- Game:* 2 Easter baskets, plastic eggs
- Food-n-Friendship:* snack, napkins, hand cleanser, *Music* CD*, media player
- Coloring Creation:* “Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life” Coloring Creation pages* (1 per child), crayons, any kitchen spice (such as thyme or rosemary), glue sticks, *Music* CD*, media player

* in your Simply Loved Kit

Opening Options

Set up one—or both—of these intro activities to start your time together. Each activity connects kids to the Bible Point and to each other. Cut apart these Option Cards, and place one by each activity you choose. Crew Guides will follow the directions and build friendships with kids as they make discoveries together!

Craft Stick Butterflies

Supplies: tissue paper, craft sticks, glue sticks, Glue Dots, markers, child-safe scissors

Make a butterfly out of tissue paper and craft sticks. Decorate with markers.

[?] **Tell about a butterfly you’ve seen.**

A caterpillar stays inside the cocoon, then comes out as a beautiful butterfly. Jesus was in the tomb after he died, but he came back to life so we can have a beautiful friendship with God. That’s why [POINT] we celebrate Jesus!

Egg Hunt

Supplies: plastic eggs, paper bags, markers, treats (*optional*)

*Hide the eggs in your meeting area. If you’d like, fill them with treats. *Allergy alert! Check for food allergies or limitations before serving.*

Find the eggs and collect them in paper bags. Write kids’ names on paper bags.

[?] **Tell about some other egg hunts you’ve done.**

We celebrate Easter in a lot of ways—like with egg hunts! But celebrating Jesus is the most important thing about Easter. So today, [POINT] we’ll celebrate Jesus! Jesus died and came back to life so we can be friends with God!

Now's a great time for Opening Options. Choose one—or both—to introduce today's Bible discoveries.

Play "The Cleanup Song" (*Music CD track 1*).

TIP:

Help kids transition by cleaning up before sitting with their Connect Crews. A Connect Crew is a smaller group of kids with one Crew Guide.

Sing & Play

Supplies

Bible

Music CD

- "Hello, My Friends"

Music Video DVD

- "Power in the Blood" music video
- "Happy Day" music video

Buddy Video DVD

- Olivia Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 4)

media player

Olivia Bible Memory Buddy poster

Happy Easter, friends! Get ready to have so much fun celebrating Jesus! Let's sing our welcome song.

Play "Hello, My Friends" (*Music CD track 2*).

Let's say hello to our Crew Guides. They're our go-to friends who are here to have fun and learn along with us.

- Kids give their Crew Guides a handshake and say "Happy Easter!"

Bible Point

Today's Bible Point is [POINT] We celebrate Jesus. Every time you hear the words [POINT] "We celebrate Jesus," make fists and then pop your hands open like fireworks and say, "Hooray, Jesus!" Let's try that together. Repeat several times.

TIP:

Repetition cements learning, so be sure to say today's Bible Point A LOT. Have fun with it! Kids will love listening for it and responding "*Hooray, Jesus!*"

[POINT] We celebrate Jesus. (*Hooray, Jesus!*) Jesus loves all people! Let's cheer for Jesus. Watch, and do what I do!

Celebrate! Celebrate! (*jazz hands*)

We love Jesus—he’s so great! (*hug self, then thumbs-up*)

Celebrate! Celebrate! (*jazz hands*)

We love Jesus—he’s so great! (*hug self, then thumbs-up*)

We have good news for you. (*two thumbs-up*)

Jesus makes our hearts brand-new! (*make a heart shape with hands*)

Celebrate! Celebrate! (*jazz hands*)

We love Jesus—he’s so great! (*hug self, then thumbs-up*)

Jesus is alive. He is stronger than sadness and death. And when we’re friends with Jesus, he gives us the power we need to share his love with others. Let’s sing a song about Jesus’ power!

Play “Power in the Blood” music video.

Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

It’s time to talk to our friend Buzzly. Bee-lieve me, he has good things to show us today. Let’s call for Buzzly. Do what I do!

- Flap hands quickly like a bee.
- Make buzzing sounds.

Show Olivia Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 4).

[POINT] We celebrate Jesus. (Hooray, Jesus!) Olivia, our Bible Memory Buddy, can help us remember how much Jesus loves us.

- Show the Bible Memory Buddy poster.
- **Olivia can spin her head all the way around! We can’t spin our heads, but we can spin our bodies!**
- Have everyone spin in a circle three times.

[POINT] We celebrate Jesus. (Hooray, Jesus!) Let’s check out our Bible Memory Verse.

Show the Bible. **The Bible is God’s true story of love! Our Bible Memory Verse comes from the Bible. Let’s say it together. I’ll say a line, and then you repeat after me.**

**“For this is how God loved the world: (make a heart shape with hands)
He gave his one and only Son.” (extend arm and hold up pointer finger)
(John 3:16)**

God’s love makes me so happy! Let’s sing a happy song.

Play “Happy Day” music video.

Bible Discovery

Supplies

Bible

“Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life” Bible Story poster

sharpened pencils (1 per Crew)

chairs

dark-colored plastic tablecloths (1 for every 2 Crews)

towels or sheets (1 for every 2 Crews)

Use the chairs and dark-colored tablecloths to create a “tomb opening” area where kids will gather. If you have a big group, make one for every two Crews. Give each Crew Guide a pencil, and place the towel or sheet “inside” the tomb.

TIP:

We call helpers Crew Guides. If you lead a small class, you can be the Crew Guide. Simply gather kids in a cozy circle around you. If you have helpers, form smaller groups so each child can be known—and so kids can befriend your helpers, too!

Today we’ll find out *why* [POINT] we celebrate Jesus. (Hooray, Jesus!) We’ll hear about a sad day that led to the happiest day.

- Have everyone make sad faces and then happy faces.

Let’s begin by talking in our Connect Crews about sad and happy days we’ve had.

- Get comfy and sit in knee-to-knee circles with Connect Crews.
- [?] **First, talk about a sad day you’ve had.** Invite Crew Guides to share first.
- [?] **Then talk about a happy day you’ve had.** Invite Crew Guides to share first.
- Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has shared.

Hold up a Bible. The Bible tells us about a sad day. Jesus was perfect—he never, ever did anything wrong. Jesus is God’s special Son, and he came to earth to help everyone become friends with God. That’s happy!

- Have everyone make happy faces.

But some people didn’t like what Jesus said. They hurt him. It was very sad.

- Have everyone make sad faces.

They put an ouchy crown of thorns on his head. Have Crew Guides help kids carefully feel the tip of a pencil to feel what a thorn feels like.

They said that Jesus must die. It was a dark, sad day. Have kids put their heads in their hands so they see darkness.

Jesus didn’t fight back. He loves us so much that he was willing to die and take care of our sin.

A Roman soldier was there. He realized that Jesus was special. Let's read what he said.

Read aloud Mark 15:39.

TIP:

Read the verse from the Bible. You're showing kids that God's Word is special. And don't worry; we've kept the verses short for young attention spans.

From everything that happened, the Roman officer could tell that Jesus was really God's special Son. Let's talk about some ways we know Jesus is special.

- **[?] What are some things you know about Jesus?** Invite a few responses from the whole group, connecting kids' answers to what makes Jesus special.

TIP:

Welcome a few responses. Be sure to summarize what kids say so everyone can hear.

Jesus is special. That's why [POINT] we celebrate Jesus. (*Hooray, Jesus!*)

Some of Jesus' friends were there on this sad day, too. They must have been so unhappy. Jesus was their friend, after all! He loved them. Jesus is our friend, too. And he loves us and was willing to die so we can be close friends with God. Since Jesus died, we don't have to be sad because of sin anymore. God forgives us and loves us. That makes me happy!

- Have everyone make happy faces.

Let's stop now and thank Jesus for what he did for us.

- Lead kids to fold their hands.
- Say a brief prayer.
- Invite kids to say "Thank you, Jesus" together, and then close in prayer.

After Jesus died, Jesus' friend Joseph took his body from the cross, wrapped him in cloth, and put him in a tomb that was like a cave.

- Show the Bible Story poster.
- Point out the "cave opening" you created ahead of time.
- Have kids pretend to roll a big stone in front of the tomb like Jesus' friends put in front of Jesus' tomb.

Guess what? That's not the end of the story. Something amazing happened three days later. Here comes the happy part!

- Have everyone make *really* happy faces.

Jesus' friends Mary, Salome (suh-LOW-mee), and Mary Magdalene brought some spices to the tomb to care for Jesus' body. They walked to Jesus' tomb, wondering how they'd move the big stone. When they arrived, the big stone was already rolled aside! Let's enter the tomb now.

- Have kids crawl through the tomb opening into the "tomb."

- **Jesus wasn't in the tomb! But the cloth Joseph had wrapped him in was there.** Let kids pass around the towel or sheet..

Jesus' friends met someone near the tomb! Let's read and find out who it was.

Read aloud Mark 16:5-6.

The angel said Jesus was alive now! Wow—that's something to celebrate. [POINT] We celebrate Jesus, too. (Hooray, Jesus!) Let's cheer for Jesus again.

Celebrate! Celebrate! (*jazz hands*)

We love Jesus—he's so great! (*hug self, then thumbs-up*)

Celebrate! Celebrate! (*jazz hands*)

We love Jesus—he's so great! (*hug self, then thumbs-up*)

We have good news for you. (*two thumbs-up*)

Jesus makes our hearts brand-new! (*make a heart shape with hands*)

Celebrate! Celebrate! (*jazz hands*)

We love Jesus—he's so great! (*hug self, then thumbs-up*)

Jesus died for us and made a way for our wrongs to be forgiven so we can be close friends with God. That's why [POINT] we celebrate Jesus. (Hooray, Jesus!)

And that's not all! Jesus is so powerful, he beat death and came back to life! The tomb was empty that Easter Sunday morning! Today and every day, [POINT] we celebrate Jesus. (Hooray, Jesus!)

TIP:

Now's a great time for Apply-It Options. Choose one or more that fit your time frame to support today's Bible discoveries before the closing Goodbye Circle.

Apply-It Options

Choose one—or all—of these activities to support kids' learning after Bible Discovery.

Game

Supplies: two Easter baskets, plastic eggs

- Fill the two baskets with eggs, and place them on opposite sides of the room.
- Form two teams, and assign a basket to each team.
- Have teams each try to keep their basket empty by carrying one egg at a time to the other team's basket.

Like it was almost impossible to make our baskets empty, it seemed impossible for Jesus to come back to life and leave his tomb empty. But Jesus can do the impossible because he's God's special Son! Jesus died and came back to life so we can be friends with God. That's why [POINT] we celebrate Jesus (Hooray, Jesus!) on Easter!

Food-n-Friendship

Supplies: snack, napkins, hand cleanser, *Music* CD, media player

- Give a napkin to a friend and say, [POINT] **"We celebrate Jesus."** (Hooray, Jesus!)
- Play "God, You Are So Good" (*Music* CD track 3).
- Eat snack together.
- [?] **When we pray, we talk with Jesus. Who has something we can talk with Jesus about?**
- Pray together.

[POINT] We celebrate Jesus (Hooray, Jesus!) on Easter Sunday because Jesus came back to life. Now we can be friends with God!

Coloring Creation

Supplies: "Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life" Coloring Creation pages (1 per child), crayons, any kitchen spice (such as thyme or rosemary), glue sticks, *Music* CD, media player

[POINT] We celebrate Jesus. (Hooray, Jesus!) When Jesus' friends came with spices to take care of his body on the first Easter Sunday, they found the tomb was empty, and an angel told them, "Jesus is alive!"

- Identify the parts of the picture kids remember from the story.
- Color the picture.
- Place glue on Jesus' friends' open hands, and sprinkle spices onto their hands.
- Play "God So Loved the World" (John 3:16) (*Music* CD track 5) as kids create.

Goodbye Circle

Supplies

Music CD

- "Goodbye, My Friends"
- "God So Loved the World" (John 3:16)

media player

Olive Bible Memory Buddy stickers (1 per child)

It's almost time to say goodbye! Let's sing our goodbye song as we join hands and make one big circle!

Play "Goodbye, My Friends" (*Music CD track 4*).

[POINT] We celebrate Jesus. (*Hooray, Jesus!*) Jesus died and then came back to life so we can be friends with God!

- Show the Bible Memory Buddy poster, and remind kids that Olivia helps us remember **[POINT] we celebrate Jesus.** (*Hooray, Jesus!*)
- Invite Crew Guides to give each child an Olivia sticker. Have Crew Guides call each child's name and have the child respond, "Who, me?"
- Then the Crew Guide "flies" like an owl to the child to give a sticker and says, "**Who celebrates Jesus? [Child's name] celebrates Jesus!**"
- Play "God So Loved the World" (John 3:16) (*Music CD track 5*).
- Do Bible Memory Verse motions and move to the music!

TIP:

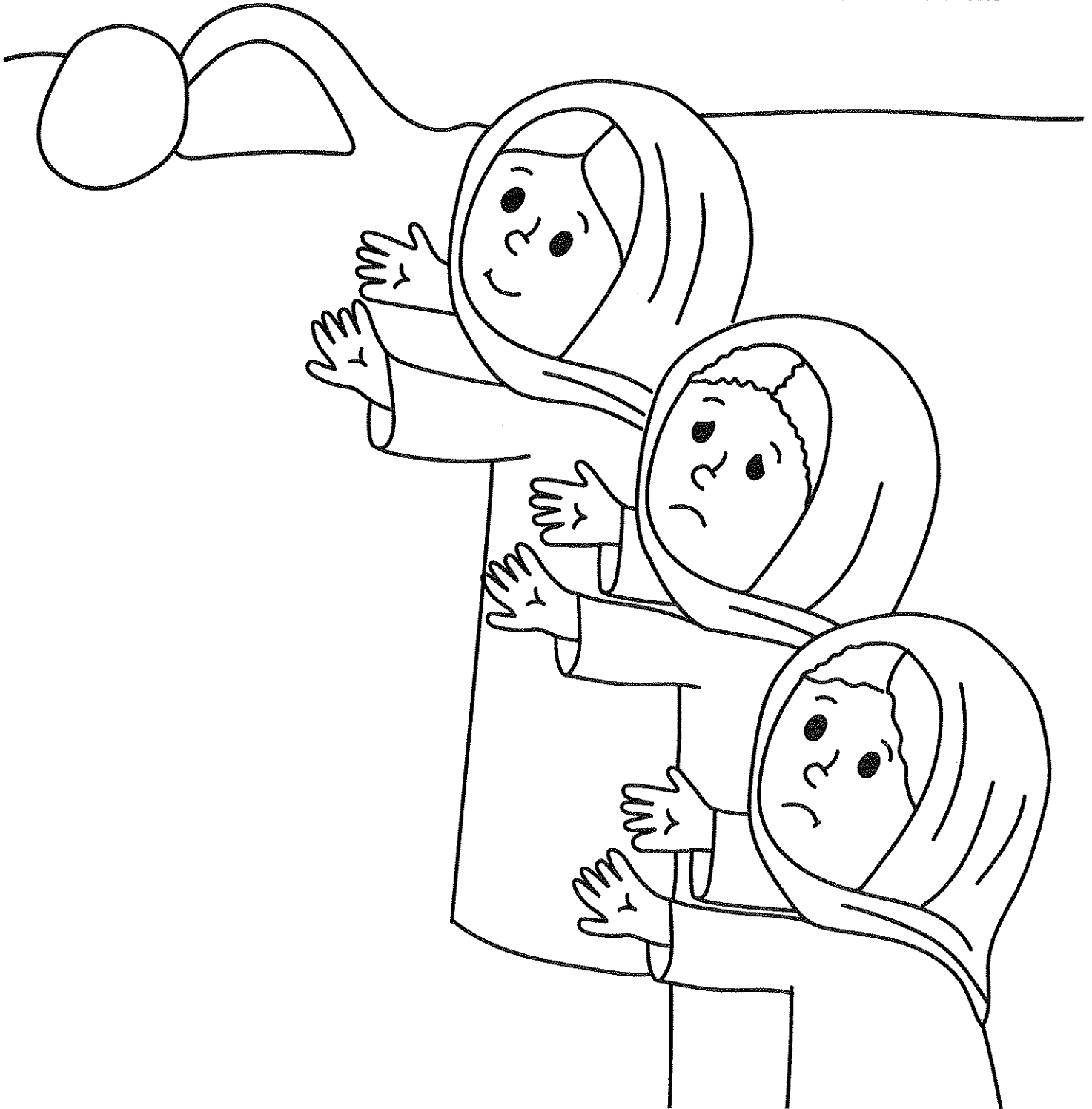
Saying each child's name in a loving way helps kids simply experience God's love through you!

###

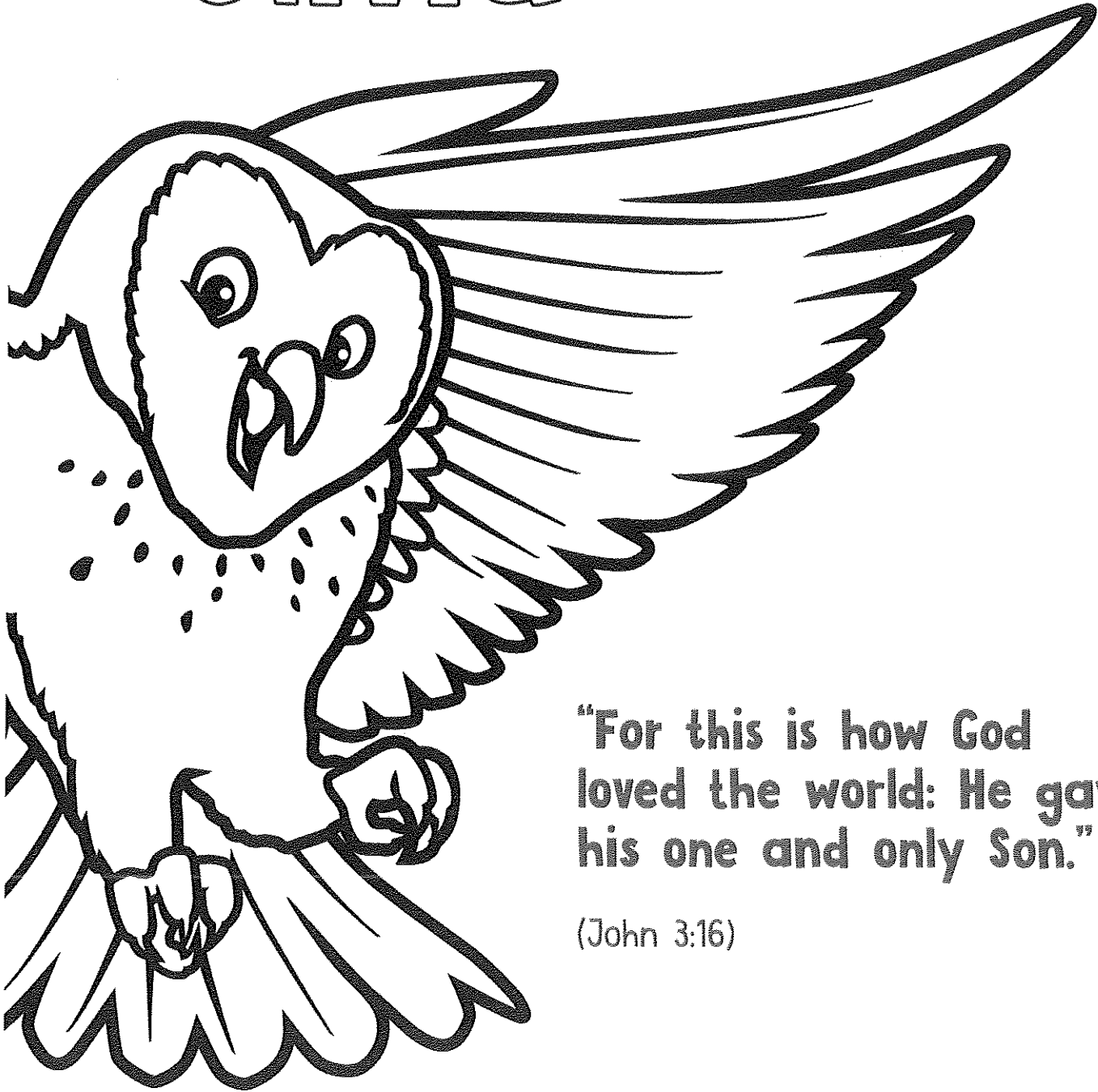
Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life

WE CELEBRATE JESUS.

Mark 15:16-16:8



Olivia



**“For this is how God
loved the world: He gave
his one and only Son.”**

(John 3:16)



Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life

We Celebrate Jesus
(Mark 15:16–16:8)

Bible Point

We celebrate Jesus...because he's our forever friend.

Purpose

The definition of *friendship* seems to be changing today. We have social media "friends," with whom we share snippets of daily life (filtered or unfiltered). Perhaps you have colleagues you lunch with or neighbors you wave to in passing. But with busy schedules, it can be challenging to develop and maintain deep, long-lasting friendships.

Let this lesson comfort you with the fact that Jesus is a friend *forever!* He's with you every day, knows all your successes and failures, and still loves you enough to give his life for you. Now *that's* a reason to celebrate!

Friendship is important to elementary kids. Kids hope for a buddy to play with at recess or an invitation to a friend's house. It's hard for kids when they feel like they don't have a real friend. As you share the Easter story with kids today, tell them the good news: Jesus wants to be their forever friend.



Prayer

Jesus, thank you for inviting me into a friendship with you—one that will grow into eternity! Use my words to help kids understand the depth of your love for them and what it means *daily* to live in friendship with you. In your name, amen.

Prep

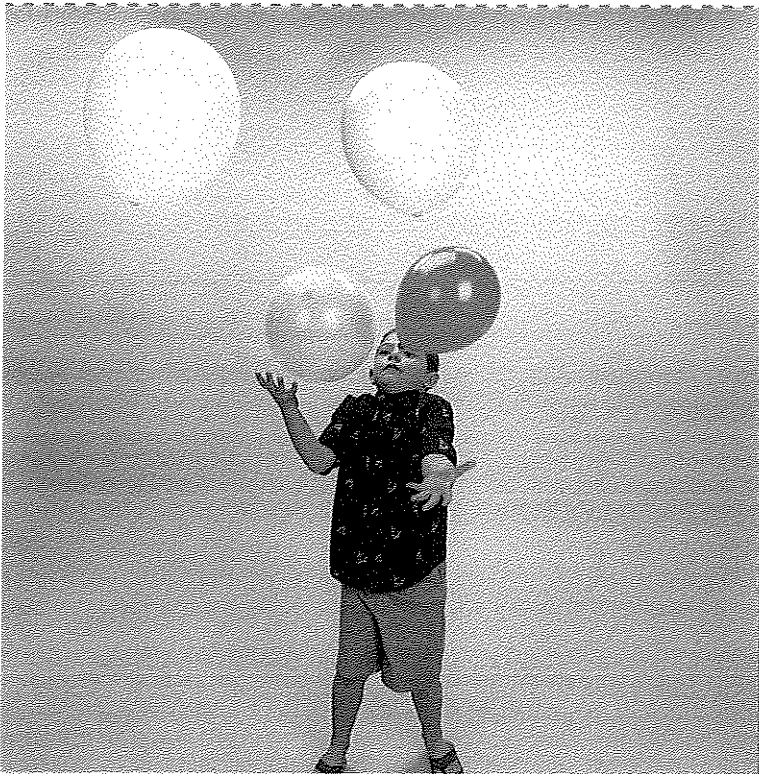
Opening Options	Sing & Play	Bible Discovery & Friendship Finale	Apply-It Options
<input type="checkbox"/> Option Cards* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Balloon Bop</i> : balloons <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Chenille Wire Butterflies</i> : chenille wires, pony beads, child-safe scissors	<input type="checkbox"/> countdown video* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Music Video DVD</i> * <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Buddy Video DVD</i> * <input type="checkbox"/> Olivia Bible Memory Buddy poster* <input type="checkbox"/> media player <input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark John 3:16)	<input type="checkbox"/> "Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life" Bible Story poster* <input type="checkbox"/> Olivia Bible Memory Buddy stickers* (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> Take-It-Home Flyers* (Easter) (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Mark 15:16-20, 24-31, 46; 16:1-4, 5-6) <input type="checkbox"/> 6-inch streamers (1 per person) <input type="checkbox"/> 3-foot streamers (1 per person) <input type="checkbox"/> 2 large envelopes <input type="checkbox"/> Easter candy	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Explore More</i> : Bibles, paper cups (1 per child), child-safe scissors, balloons (1 per child), streamers <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Game</i> : streamer pieces, balloons

* in your **Simply Loved Kit**



Opening Options

Set up one—or both—of these intro activities to start your time together. Each activity connects kids to the Bible Point and to each other. Cut apart these Option Cards, and place one by each activity you choose. Crew Guides will follow the directions and build friendships with kids as they make discoveries together!



Balloon Bop

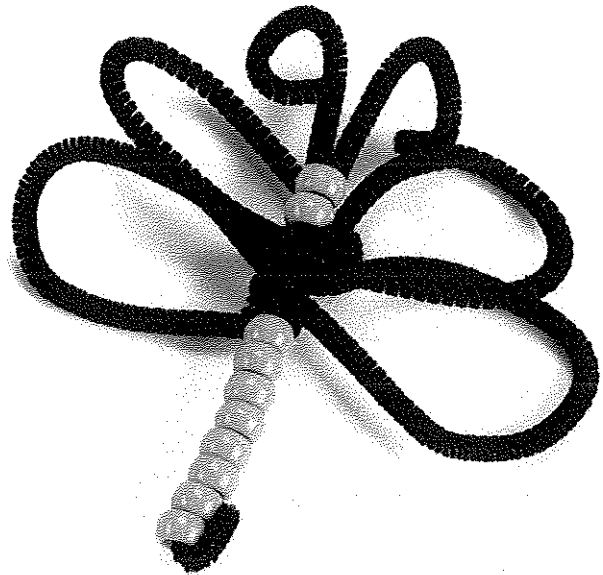
Supplies

- balloons

Blow up three balloons and tie them off. See if you can keep all of your balloons in the air as you walk across the room.

? What was challenging about keeping the balloons up?

Maybe you got tired, or a balloon got away from you. You couldn't keep them up forever! Today we'll see how *nothing* could keep Jesus down—not even death. That's a reason we celebrate Jesus!



Chenille Wire Butterflies

Supplies

- chenille wires, pony beads, scissors

Make a butterfly from chenille wires.

? What do you know about butterflies?

Butterflies start out as caterpillars. They wrap up in cocoons, and when they come out, they're completely changed. Today we'll see how Jesus got wrapped up and came out completely changed, too. We celebrate Jesus.

Opening

Now's a great time for Opening Options. Choose one—or both—to introduce today's Bible discoveries.



countdown video (1 minute)

Help kids transition, clean up the activities, and sit with Connect Crews. A Connect Crew is a small group of kids with one Crew Guide.

Sing & Play

Hello, friends! Welcome! It's such a happy day because *you're* here! Let's start off with some high-energy celebration as a way to celebrate Jesus!



"Happy Day" music video

Bible Point

I can't wait to discover more about how we celebrate Jesus. That's our Bible Point today, so every time you hear someone say the words "We celebrate Jesus," I want you to respond in a certain way. Do what I do!

- Make fists, then pop hands open like fireworks and say, "Hooray, Jesus!"
- Repeat several times.

Repetition cements learning, so be sure to say today's Bible Point A LOT. Have fun with it! Kids will love listening for it and responding with "Hooray, Jesus!"

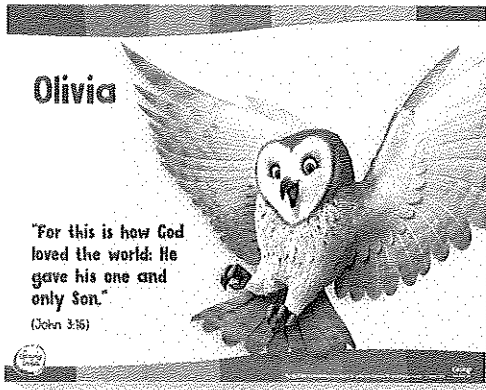
We celebrate Jesus (*Hooray, Jesus!*) because he made a way for all people to be his friends *forever!*

Supplies

- Bible
- media player
- *Music Video* DVD
 - "Happy Day" music video
 - "Power in the Blood" music video
- *Buddy Video* DVD
 - Olivia Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 4)
- Olivia Bible Memory Buddy poster



Hooray, Jesus!



Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

Let's check in with our Bible Memory Buddy. It's Olivia the barn owl. How much do you know about owls? Let's find out with a This-or-That Challenge! You'll hear two fun facts about owls. It's up to you to decide which is true—this fact or that!

- 🕒 You can find barn owls in almost every part of the world **except** which continent? Is it Asia or Antarctica?
- Have everyone flap their arms like wings to vote for *this* (Asia) or hoot like an owl vote for *that* (Antarctica).
- Make a drumroll sound by patting your thighs or the floor.
- Dramatically give the answer: **Barn owls *do not* live on the continent of Antarctica. But God's love is everywhere and**

on every continent!

- Watch the Bible Memory Buddy video to find out more.



Olivia Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 4)



Show the Bible. **The Bible is God's true story of love! It's one big book that's filled with a bunch of little books. Our Bible Memory Verse is John 3:16. Let's say the verse together. I'll say a line, and then you repeat after me.**

"For this is how God loved the world: (make a heart shape with hands) He gave his one and only Son." (extend arm and hold up pointer finger)
(John 3:16)

God's Word is filled with so many reasons that we celebrate Jesus. (Hooray, Jesus!) Jesus is God's amazing gift of love. Because of Jesus' power, we can be friends with him forever. Let's sing and celebrate!



"Power in the Blood" music video

Bible Discovery

Circle Up & Connect

Let's circle up and spend a little time simply getting to know each other in smaller groups called **Connect Crews**.

- Arrange kids into Connect Crews with one helper—or Crew Guide—per group.
- Invite kids to sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.
- Have kids give their Crew Guides and each other sky high-fives, with arms extended as high as they can go.
- Have kids take turns saying their names and answering this question. Crew Guides go first.
- ② **Describe your perfect day; one you wish would never end.**

It's a celebration—and this lesson uses a lot of streamers! Have a couple of extra rolls nearby so you can tear off extra pieces when needed.

The Heart of the Matter

Hand each person a 6-inch length of crepe paper streamer. If you have a large class, you may want to give each person a 3-inch streamer instead, so kids *can't* make a path across the room.

Let's imagine these streamers are good things—things that bring you joy, like that day you just described. Invite kids to call out other things that bring them joy, such as family members, sports, or video games.

Let's see how far that happiness can take us. Can our streamers make a path that stretches from wall to wall across our room? If you can make a path, you'll get a special Easter prize—candy!

Have everyone lay their streamers end to end to see how far the path goes across the room. Keep it up throughout the lesson.

- ② **What happened?** Invite a few responses from the whole group.

Welcome a few responses. Be sure to summarize what kids say so everyone can hear.

It looks like the good stuff came up short. That reminds me of the saying, "All good things must come to an end." Let's circle up and talk about this in our Connect Crews.

Supplies

- Bible
- "Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life" Bible Story poster
- 6-inch streamers (1 per person)
- 3-foot streamers (1 per person)
- 2 large envelopes
- Easter candy ①
- ① **Allergy alert!** Check for food allergies or limitations before serving.

We call helpers **Crew Guides**. If you lead a small class, you can be the Crew Guide. Simply circle up with the kids. If you have helpers, form smaller groups so each child can be known—and so kids can befriend your helpers, too!



- Have Crews sit in knee-to-knee circles.
- 🗣️ **Do you think that saying is true or false? Why do you think that?**
- 🗣️ **Tell about something good that came to an end for you. How did you feel?** Share your own experience first, such as a dream family vacation or a job you loved but had to leave. Then let kids share.
- Give Crews several minutes to discuss.

In this life, *everything* ends. Life has a beginning, and it also has an end. But Jesus came to change all that. That's why we celebrate Jesus. (Hooray, Jesus!) His love and power conquered death and changed things forever!

Let's see what happened. But first, we all need another streamer.

Experience the Bible Story

Hand each person a 3-foot streamer and keep one for yourself. Gather everyone at one end of the room.

- 🗣️ **When do you usually see streamers like this?**

Since we're talking about celebrating Jesus, let's use streamers to tell this amazing story of celebration, sorrow, and surprise! First, you need to know that when Jesus lived on earth, he did a *lot* of things worth celebrating.

Jesus healed sick people! Lead kids in jumping up and down, waving streamers, and cheering.

Jesus fed huge crowds! Lead kids in rubbing their "full" bellies, waving streamers, and cheering.

Jesus showed love to people who seemed unlovable! Lead kids in high-fiving their friends, waving streamers, and cheering.

But not *everyone* celebrated Jesus. Set down your streamers to show how much those people were *not* fans of Jesus. Pause. Some religious leaders thought he was a liar, so they made a plan to get him arrested.

And soldiers didn't just arrest Jesus; they were mean and teased him. As you listen to what happened, tear a small piece from your streamer every time you hear about the soldiers hurting Jesus.




Read aloud Mark 15:16-20.

Pause while kids tear off parts of their streamers and set the small pieces in front of them.

Then the soldiers made Jesus carry a heavy wooden cross—the same cross they would soon nail his body to. Jesus was so tired and the cross was so heavy that someone had to help Jesus.

Find someone nearby and use both of your streamers to make a cross shape. Hold that cross together as you walk across the room. If there is an uneven number of kids, use your own streamer to make a cross with a child. Gather kids, and have them sit down.

But Jesus' sad day didn't end there. Each time you hear of Jesus being hurt, tear another piece from your streamer.

 Read aloud Mark 15:24-31, pausing so kids can tear off pieces of their streamers. Ask kids to hold up whatever is left of their streamers.

There wasn't much left of Jesus. He took one last breath, and then he died. Tear your streamer in half and set it in front of you. Pause.

Jesus' friends thought it was over. Their precious, amazing friend—so full of life and power—had died. Life seemed a mess, a lot like our scraps of paper all over the floor. It was over.


One of Jesus' friends collected Jesus' body and prepared it to be buried. Choose a child to represent Joseph of Arimathea. **Joseph, you'll collect all the paper scraps and put them in this unsealed envelope.** Give Joseph one envelope, and keep the other one out of sight. **Everyone else, strike a pose to show how Jesus' friends must have felt after he died.** Pause while everyone else strikes a sad pose. **Keep doing that while I read about Joseph.**

 Read aloud Mark 15:46.

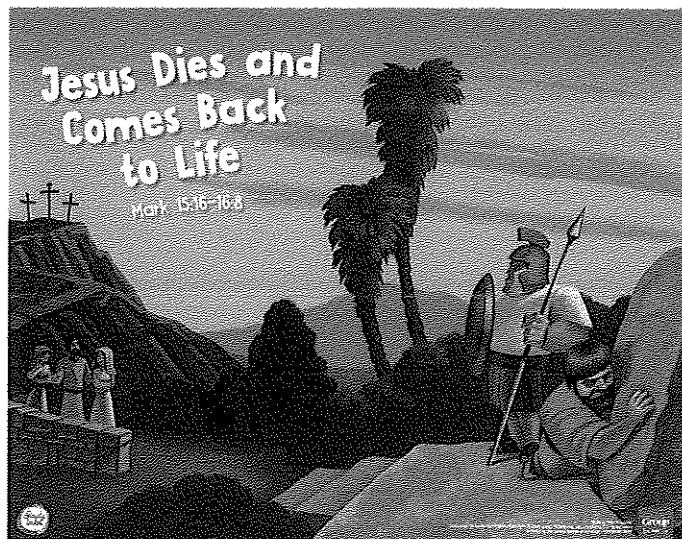
Show the Bible Story poster. **Joseph, please seal the envelope to show how Joseph rolled the stone in front of the tomb.** Direct "Joseph" to set the "tomb" envelope at the front of the room.

For three long days, Jesus' friends lived in shock. They'd scattered in fear—maybe the soldiers would come for *them* next! Have kids move apart from each other and sit down.

Those days probably felt dark, endless, and hopeless. Close your eyes to experience how dark and lonely life felt for them. While kids have their eyes closed, seal and swap out the empty envelope with the one Joseph sealed. Set the full envelope out of sight.

 Read aloud Mark 16:1-4.

Let kids open their eyes, and choose a child who's wearing white to represent the angel.



This is a great time to share your church's traditions relating to kids making a faith commitment.



Read aloud Mark 16:5-6.

Angel, go ahead and open up that envelope. Pause while the child opens the envelope and shows everyone it's empty!

We celebrate Jesus (*Hooray, Jesus!*) because he was stronger than death. Jesus didn't come back to life just to show God's power over death; Jesus' death had a purpose. He took the punishment for the wrong things *we've* done! Because of Jesus, we can be forever friends with God. Now *that's* reason to celebrate!

Have kids talk in their Crews. Crew Guides can go first.

- 🗣️ **Imagine you're one of Jesus' friends. What words describe how you feel watching those things happen to Jesus?**

Jesus loved you so much that he allowed himself to be tortured, bullied, and killed just so he could spend forever as your friend.

- 🗣️ **Say a word that describes how *that* makes you feel.**

Point to the short path of streamers made earlier.

In life, good things come to an end. But we celebrate Jesus (*Hooray, Jesus!*) because his love and friendship *never* end! They extend past this life and into a life in heaven forever!

Now *that's* something to celebrate. Happy Easter, friends! Distribute candy for kids to enjoy.

Now's a great time for Apply-It Options. Choose one—or both—of the following reinforcement activities to support today's Bible discoveries before the Friendship Finale.

Apply-It Options

Choose one—or both—of these activities to support kids' learning after Bible Discovery.

Explore More

Supplies

- Bibles, paper cups (1 per child), child-safe scissors, balloons (1 per child), streamers

Let's read something Jesus once told his friend Martha.



Distribute Bibles, and help kids find and read John 11:25-26 together.

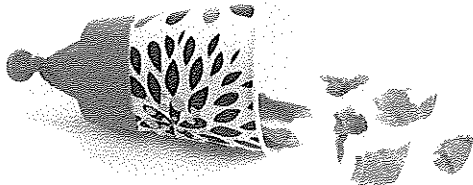
Jesus beat death. When we believe in him, we'll be friends with him forever. Now *that's* something to celebrate!

- ② **What do you do to celebrate your birthday? a favorite sports team? a holiday?**
- ② **How can you show that you celebrate Jesus?**

Sometimes celebrations are big, noisy, surprising things. Let's make a craft that'll help us make a big, noisy, excited celebration of Jesus' love, power, and friendship!

- Cut the bottom off a cup.
- Tie off an uninflated balloon, then cut off the rounded end and discard it.
- Turn the cup upside down, and stretch the open end of the balloon over the bottom of the cup.
- Place torn-up streamer pieces (like confetti) into the cup so they go down into the balloon.
- Pull on the knotted end of the balloon, then let it go to launch up the confetti in celebration!

We celebrate Jesus! (Hooray, Jesus!) His love and power are bigger than anything we can imagine! His friendship with us can go on forever. That's worth a big, noisy—even messy—celebration!



Game

Supplies

- streamer pieces, balloons
 - Form a circle, and hand each person an uninflated balloon.
 - Wad a streamer piece into a "ball" and hand it to the person who most recently celebrated a birthday.
 - Show the birthday friend how to blow up a balloon and then use the air in the balloon to move the paper ball across the circle. Have the other kids blow up their balloons, too.
 - Challenge kids to keep the ball constantly moving across the circle, using just the air from their balloons. After a couple of minutes, call time.

Keep your circle to no more than 10 people so they will have an easier time moving the paper ball across the circle.

- ② **How do you feel after playing this game for just a few minutes? Why?**

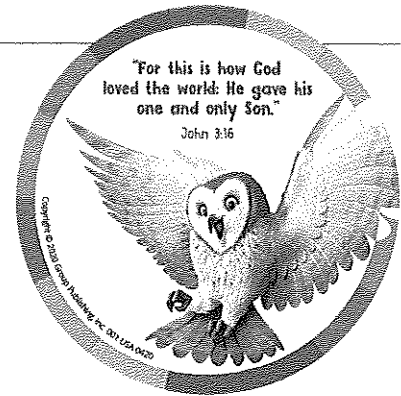
Blowing up a balloon over and over again gets tiring! You couldn't do that forever, could you? Today we heard that Jesus is so powerful, even *death* couldn't stop him. We celebrate Jesus (Hooray, Jesus!) because our friendship with him can go on and on and on forever. Jesus will never get tired of being your friend!



Supplies

- Olivia Bible Memory Buddy stickers (1 per child)
- Take-It-Home Flyers (Easter) (1 per child)

Friendship Finale



Have kids sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.

Olivia, our Bible Memory Buddy, can help us remember to celebrate Jesus. (Hooray, Jesus!) You'll each receive an Olivia sticker to help you remember that you can have a forever friendship with Jesus. You can wear it now or take it home to give to someone. Crew Guides will give each person a sticker like this.

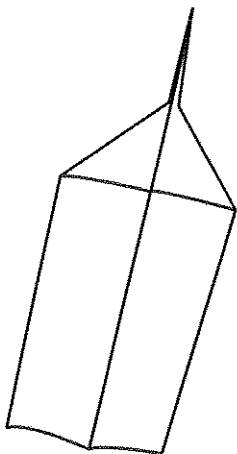
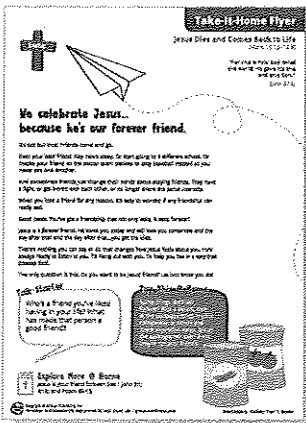
- Ask a willing child to help you demonstrate the following actions.
- Have the person take one of the streamers from the "Heart of the Matter" experience. Set the sticker in the middle of the streamer, and have the recipient wrap the sticker in the streamer like a little gift.
- As the person is wrapping the Bible Memory Buddy sticker, say "[Name], celebrate Jesus, your forever friend."
- Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has received a sticker.

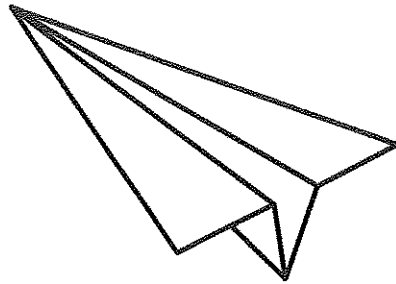
Saying each child's name in a loving way helps kids simply experience Jesus' love through you!

Nothing could stop Jesus' love for you—not even death! Jesus and his love for you is one good thing that *never* comes to an end. We celebrate Jesus (Hooray, Jesus!) and can keep celebrating our friendship with him forever! That's a gift.

I'd like to read you something about our friend Jesus. As you listen, turn away from your Crew members. Pause as kids move. Now imagine Jesus is behind you. Pause. Close your eyes and listen as I read about Jesus. When I've finished, turn around to join your Crew members to show that Jesus loves everyone.

- Read the first section of the Easter Take-It-Home Flyer.
- **Now I'll give you one of these flyers to help you talk about Jesus' love in your Connect Crews *and* at home, too. Think of this as a practice time for talking about Jesus with your family at home.**
- Distribute Take-It-Home Flyers to Crew Guides, and have them share about their own friendship with Jesus as they discuss the "Talk Starter" question together and then invite kids to share.
- Kids share prayer requests and pray together in Connect Crews.
- Crew Guides distribute Take-It-Home Flyers and follow the directions to help kids fold the paper to "fly" home. ○





Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life (Mark 15:16–16:8)

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son."

(John 3:16)

We celebrate Jesus... because he's our forever friend.

It's sad but true: Friends come and go.

Even your best friend may move away. Or start going to a different school. Or maybe your friend on the soccer team decides to play baseball instead so you never see one another.

And sometimes friends just change their minds about staying friends. They have a fight, or get bored with each other, or no longer share the same interests.

When you lose a friend for any reason, it's easy to wonder if any friendship can really last.

Good news: You've got a friendship that not only lasts, it lasts forever!

Jesus is a *forever* friend. He loves you today and will love you tomorrow and the day after that and the day after that...you get the idea.

There's nothing you can say or do that changes how Jesus feels about you. He's always ready to listen to you. To hang out with you. To help you live in a way that pleases God.

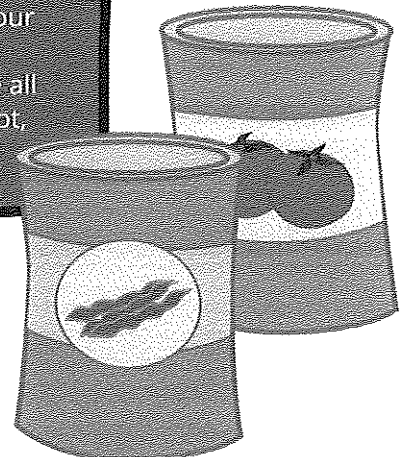
The only question is this: Do you want to be Jesus' friend? Let him know you do!

Talk-Starters

Who's a friend you've liked having in your life? What has made that person a good friend?

Try-This-@-Home

Some things *don't* last forever! With a parent, look at the packaged foods in your refrigerator or pantry and check expiration dates. Are all the packages still safe? If not, they're not your friends!



Explore More @ Home

Jesus is your friend forever! See 1 John 3:1; 4:16; and Psalm 86:15.



Make this page fly home!

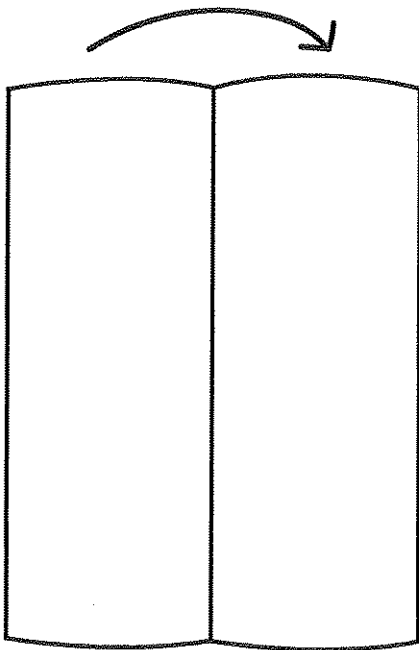
Fold a flyer, and when you get home



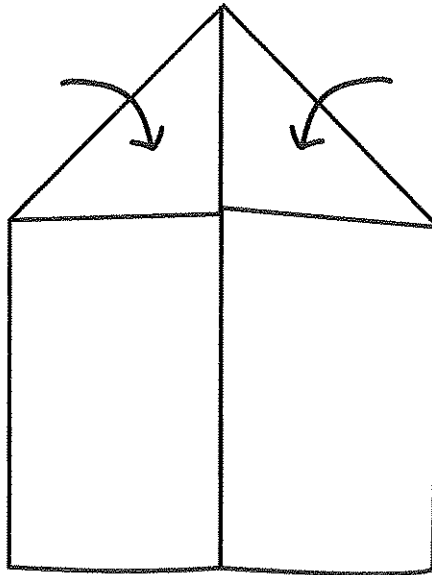
...play a game of Flyer Golf. Starting at the front door, see how many tosses it takes to land your plane on your bed. Always toss the plane from wherever it landed! Then ask someone else in your family to do the same thing. Who does it in the fewest tosses?

Here's how:

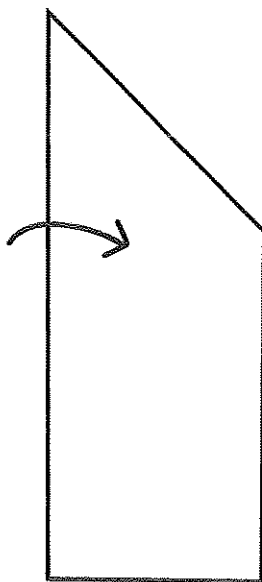
1 Fold the paper in half lengthwise as shown.



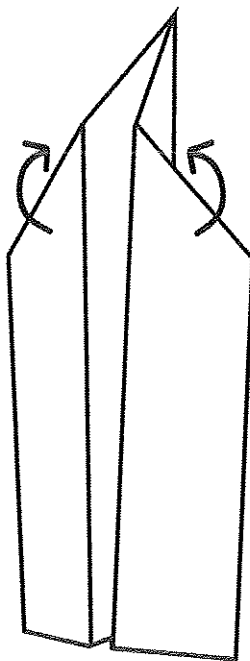
2 Unfold, and then fold the top two corners to the center line to create flaps.



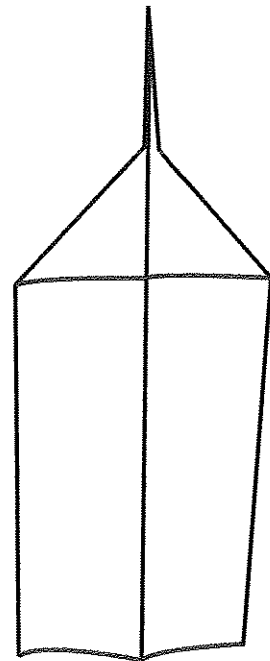
3 Once again, fold the paper on half.



4 Fold the edges down to meet the bottom of the airplane body.



5 Take aim, and let it fly!





Permission granted to reproduce this page in an educational setting © 2001 CPH

