

A Night to Remember – He is Not Here – by Marcy Lytle

I recently purchased a really cute wooden Easter set to put out for the season. Maybe you have one, or not. And I decided that it would be fun for the kids to use the pieces to tell and learn more about one particular aspect of the Easter story, and that is “He is not here.” In other words, Christ isn’t dead, he’s not inattentive or asleep, and he’s not inactive. He’s alive!

Preparation: If you have some manipulatives, use them. But if not, just copy and print out or draw two angels, a cross, a tomb with the stone rolled aside, a guard, and the women. Let the kids draw and cut these out before devo time with the family. Or just draw the scene as you tell the story, on a white board, on a chalk board, or on paper. Use your own imagination to have the kids interact this month.

Let’s act out the story of the Resurrection Morning and see in a fresh way what it means to hear the words that “He is not here.”

The story is from Luke 24, where you can read along as the kids act out the truth of Easter.

Luke 24: 1-3 Women went to the tomb where Jesus had been buried after his death on the cross. What they found was the large rock was rolled away from the tomb! (Kids act or draw this part of the story.)

Why were the women going to the tomb? What do you think they thought when they saw the big rock was moved?

Luke 24:4-8 Two gleaming figures stood beside the women and at first they were afraid and bent down to the ground (Ask the kids to draw or act this out). The figures spoke and said “he is not here – he is risen!” And they told the women they would not find him among the dead. And they reminded them of how Jesus said he would die and be raised again on the third day.

Let’s stop here. If Jesus told them he would rise again, then why were they surprised that the stone was moved?

If Jesus had just died, here’s the kind of God we would serve:

One who doesn’t hear us when we pray, because he’s not alive.

One who doesn’t care about and meet our needs, because he’s not alive and moving.

One who doesn’t move in our lives to bring us closer to Him, because he’s not alive or awake.

That’s the kind of god others serve who do not know Jesus. They pray to other gods who aren’t alive, they hope in things that can’t help them (like money and fame), and they ask for help from sources that aren’t even able to help them!

Do you see the amazing story of Easter in the fact that our Jesus, our Lord, our Savior, is not where the dead are? He’s alive and well and that makes him personal, available and ready to take care of us and keep us all of our lives!

Why do we pray? (Let the kids answer). We pray because God told us to, and because He’s alive and listening.

Why do we not worry when bad things happen? (Let the kids answer). We don’t worry because our God is alive and working all things out to meet our needs for his purposes and for our best.

Why do we never have to feel alone or afraid? (Let the kids answer). We don't have to feel alone or afraid because the God who sent his son to die and then brought him back to life is now with us, near us, beside us, and in us...at all times in all places.

That's the story of Easter and those four little words "He is not here." Jesus isn't among the dead gods of the world. Jesus is the One True God, the Son of God, the Savior, and we belong to him when we believe!

As you look again at the stone that was moved, bow your heads as a family and thank Jesus that he died on the cross and overcame death, so that we could live with him, free of sin and shame, alive in Christ.