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youth connecting **faith & life**

## Living for Resurrection

Earlier this month ABC TV premiered the new drama *Resurrection*. The pilot episode introduced an eight-year-old boy who wakes up in a rice patty in China and is eventually reunited with his parents at his home in Missouri. The problem is that the boy had drowned thirty-two years prior and no one (other than his mother) is prepared to accept his return. While the boy is left to question whether he died and is dead, his father is forced to reveal an old family secret, and his best boyhood friend turned local pastor questions whether he truly believes in miracles. Each episode features a new character who has come back from the dead and the struggles of his or her loved ones to understand what has happened.

### Confusion

Popular TV shows and movies like *Resurrection* often use religious terms far outside of the Christian context. The new ABC series uses the term *resurrection* instead of walking dead (which would be more accurate). Resurrection is not simply coming back to life—into one's old body and a random time continuum. Resurrection means to be raised with Christ into a new spiritual body for eternal life.

The problem is that many people, especially non-believers, may not know the difference. Even worse, believers may be lulled by the “entertainment” into thinking popular shows have merit because they use “religious” terms.

### Getting Clear

As Christians we are supposed to know what the Bible teaches. But do we know what resurrection truly is? Do we understand the Old and New Testament stories of people being raised from the dead and how those are different from Jesus' resurrection? Regardless of media depictions of resurrection, Christians know that the resurrection of Christ was the greatest gift ever given and that our response is to live a holy life that will be worthy of our own resurrection through Christ.

## Tip for This Issue

Today's issue of LINC looks at one of many new TV shows that use a religious term in a misleading way. Look for other movies or TV shows that do the same. Think about the impact of this trend and about why entertainment executives might be using this trend. Look up the word *resurrection* in a few sources. How can you help the youth understand the difference between biblical accounts of being raised from the dead and Jesus' resurrection? Also, this lesson utilizes technology: Will your students have smart phones, will you use your own, or will you adapt the activities in another way?

# Teacher Bible Prep



## THAT GOD'S GLORY MIGHT BE REVEALED

**Purpose:** To help youth celebrate Jesus' resurrection through holy living.

**Question of the Day:** Can someone actually come back to life?

**Cultural Connection:** TV Series *Resurrection*

**Topic:** Resurrection

### Raised From the Dead 1 Kings 17:17-24

Then he stretched himself over the boy three times and cried out to the LORD, "LORD my God, please give this boy's life back to him. —1 Kings 17:21

#### Commentary:

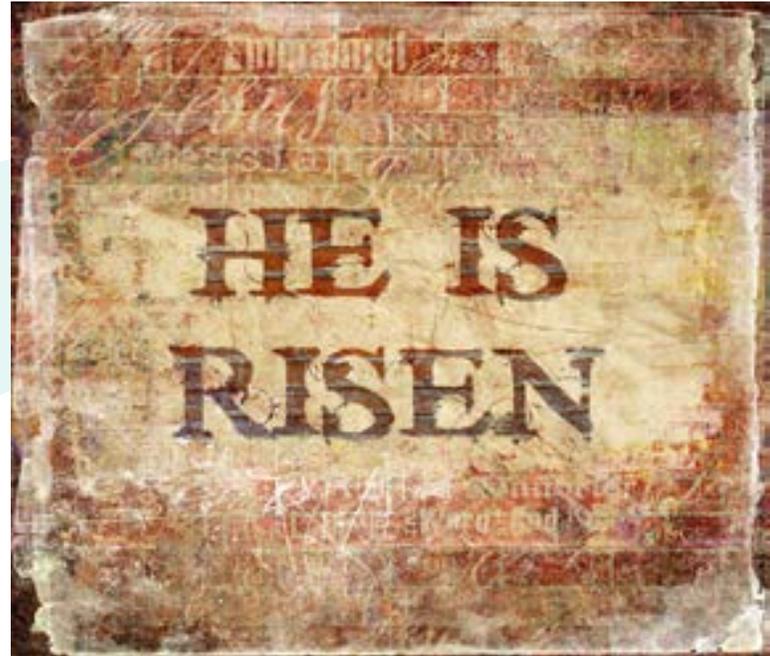
In this story God's prophet Elijah was sent by God to stay with a widow and her son during a great drought. God's presence was revealed in how food was provided for them so that they would not starve. But, when the widow's son became ill and died, she blamed Elijah. Elijah trusted God for everything so he took her son, prayed for God to restore his life, and stretched himself out over the boy—as if to transfer God's power of life and breath through him and into the boy. God listened to the faithful prophet Elijah and restored the boy to life. It was not magic or a resurrection. It was the power of God being revealed in raising a boy from death to life so that God's authority would be known. The widow responded by believing in God.

#### Questions to think about:

- What are some other biblical examples of people being raised from the dead? (see 2 Kings 4:8-37; Matthew 27:51-54; John 11:17-44)?
- What does this story tell you about Elijah's relationship with God?
- How does this story compare with media depictions of people being raised from the dead?

### The Resurrection of Jesus John 20:11-29

After eight days his disciples were again in a house and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus entered and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here.



Look at my hands. Put your hand into my side. No more disbelief. Believe!" —John 20:26-27

#### Commentary:

Even though Jesus told the disciples that he would die and be raised after the third day, his resurrection was still astonishing and unbelievable to them. Thomas could not believe until he saw for himself. We know from the accounts of the disciples that Jesus no longer had the same body after his resurrection. His body was transformed from mere mortal flesh and bones to a spiritual body that defied earthly matter and laws. His appearance was so different that Mary and many others did not recognize him at first. Jesus promises us that belief in him extends the promise of resurrection to us: We will also experience a new life and a new body in the resurrection.

#### Questions to think about:

- How was Jesus' resurrection different from the biblical people who were raised from the dead?
- How is the show *Resurrection* misleading?
- Why do you think Jesus' friends had a hard time believing he was resurrected?
- Do you ever have a hard time believing in Jesus' resurrection or in your own resurrection someday?

### Preparing for Resurrection 1 Peter 1:3-25

You must be holy in every aspect of your lives, just as the one who called you is holy. It is written, *You will be holy, because I am holy.* —1 Peter 1:15-16

# Teacher Bible Prep



## Commentary:

If we believe in Jesus as our Savior and live our lives following his example of love, we are promised eternal life. At some point we all will face death and give up our earthly body to receive our spiritual body. Our acceptance of God's gift to us of eternal life compels us to change how we live our earthly lives. We are called to give up living life for ourselves and to live a life of holiness—always striving to grow in grace as we attempt to follow Jesus' example.

## Questions to think about:

- During Lent we prepare to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. How can we prepare for our own future resurrection?
- What are some things we need to give up doing in order to become more holy? (*judging others, breaking commandments, lying, acting selfishly*)?
- What are some things we can start doing in order to become more holy?

## DEVOTION: RESURRECTION BODY

Read **1 Corinthians 15:35-58**. The resurrection of Christ and the idea of resurrection was confusing even to those who were closest to Jesus. It is no wonder that so many people have questioned it or wondered about it. Try to read two or three different Bible translations of this passage, such as the Common English Bible or THE MESSAGE. Paul tried to explain as clearly as possible what resurrection would be like for all of us. Pray for insight from the Holy Spirit as you read this Scripture passage again. Listen for what Jesus might be trying to tell you through the words.

- What new insights have you gained?

*“As a result of all this, my loved brothers and sisters, you must stand firm, unshakable, excelling in the work of the Lord as always, because you know that your labor isn't going to be for nothing in the Lord.” (15:58, CEB)*

- As you prepare for this lesson how can this verse help you respond to Jesus' resurrection by living a more holy life?



**We are called to live a life of holiness.**

**NEXT WEEK:** We all like change as long as we're the ones making the changes. Life's reality is that most change in life happens *to* us. It can throw us off balance and even leave us a little grumpy. The gospel is a story of change and, for some of the Bible's characters, it was quite unexpected. Next week we'll explore how several Bible characters embraced the change that God brought them and what that change meant for their lives.

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# Alive Like Never Before!

**GETTING READY:** You will need Bibles, copies of “Work It Out” (Page 6), markerboard, pens or markers, and a smart phone/tablet/computer.

## OPEN

### You Can't Take God Out of Resurrection (15 minutes)

Ask for a youth volunteer to write on a markerboard as students call out the names of TV shows or movies that use “religious” words or terms in their titles or episodes (for example: *Believe*, *Resurrection*, *Saved*, *Heaven*, *Touched by An Angel*). You may want to allow youth to use their phones or technology to search for examples and tell what they find.

Use the information from Page 1 to talk about the new TV show, *Resurrection*. If any youth have watched episodes, ask them to briefly tell their thoughts about the show. Invite a student to look up the definition of *resurrection* and read it aloud to the class. (Most definitions begin with the resurrection of Christ and biblical references.)

Remind students that Christians believe and the Bible teaches that only God has the power to raise from the dead or to resurrect. Even though Jesus, some prophets, and some disciples raised people from the dead, it was accomplished through the power of God and the Holy Spirit.

Ask:

- How many of these shows or movies, do you think, had anything to do with God, or spreading the good news of Jesus?
- Why do you think entertainment executives use religious terms or ideas for something other than religion or faith? What could be the harm in so doing?

## EXPLORE

### Talk Topic 1: A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (15 minutes)

#### Middle School Option

Invite students to turn to **1 Kings 17:17-24** in their Bibles. Lead a brief readers theater using volunteers to play the roles of the widow, her son, Elijah, and God. While you narrate, encourage students to truly act out their parts. (However, you might discourage Elijah from actually laying on top of the son!) Applaud their acting and then ask students to turn to **2 Kings 4:8-37** and read to themselves the story about Elisha raising the Shunammite woman's son from the dead. Direct their attention to the chart on Page 6. Ask students to work in pairs to complete the chart using the Scriptures they have read so far.

#### High School Option

Talk about the following:

- When you watch movies or TV shows that have religious themes or ideas, do they influence what you think or believe about those faith issues? Do some shows leave you questioning what you believe and why?
- Do you believe people can be raised from the dead? How did you form those thoughts or that belief?
- Read **1 Kings 17:17-24**. How is this account of being raised from the dead different from what you have seen in the movies or on TV? How are TV shows and movies misleading?
- Why do you think God would raise people from the dead in the first place?

#### ! Bonus Small Group Discussion Option

Explain to the class that the titles of this week's Talk Topics are the titles or familiar words to old hymns. Invite students to use technology (smart phones or a computer) to find each of the three hymns on a website such as [hymnary.org](http://hymnary.org). Students also may find the songs in hymnals if your church uses them.

Form small teams and in each team invite a student to read aloud the lyrics to the first hymn about God, then ask: “What do these words (by Martin Luther) tell you about God, and life and death?”

Next, invite another student to read aloud the lyrics to the second hymn, “And Can It Be That I Should Gain” by Charles Wesley, then ask: “What do these words express about Jesus' death and resurrection?”

Finally, invite another student to read aloud the lyrics to the third hymn, “Take Time to Be Holy,” then ask: “How can these words help you prepare to respond to and celebrate Jesus' resurrection?”

# Alive Like Never Before!



## Talk Topic 2: How Can It Be That I Should Gain? (15 minutes)

### Middle School Option

If students have smart phones with them, use their technology. (If not, use a tablet or your personal phone to take pictures of students.) Invite students to pair up and take a picture of his or her partner with the partner's phone. (Students should only have a photo of themselves on their phone and should not post photos of others in the class on social media. All photos should be deleted before students leave the class room.)

Next, ask students to use their camera photo editor to change the photo to black and white, or sepia, or outline, or whatever filter is available. Invite students to show the "changed" photos of themselves. Use the activity and "Teacher Bible Prep" commentary and questions to lead a brief discussion about how Jesus' body was changed after resurrection, but was still Jesus (see **John 20:11-29**). Finally, ask pairs to complete the chart on Page 6 using the last three Scriptures. Ask, "Using the information on the chart, what have you learned about the difference between being raised from the dead and resurrection?"

### High School Option

Current TV shows like *Resurrection* or *Believe* may hint at Christianity or God but often in an obscure way that leaves the viewers wondering what they were actually seeing: magic or illusion, miracle or evil, resurrection or walking dead. Either way viewers are falsely led. Invite students to take turns reading aloud **John 20:11-29**, then ask the following.

- What do you believe about life after death?
- What do you believe about Jesus' resurrection?
- What do you believe about our resurrection in the future?
- Where and how did you form those ideas and beliefs?

## Talk Topic 3: Take Time to Be Holy (10 minutes)

As we continue through the season of Lent and prepare for Easter, we near the time to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. But before arriving at the celebration, we must walk through some other happenings, including the emotional events of Holy Week. Invite students to reflect on what they may be giving up or adding during Lent. Encourage students in their Lenten journey, reminding them that even if they slip up one day, they can recommit and continue to give up something, or to add something to their spiritual disciplines.

Invite students to look at the words to the hymn "Take Time to Be Holy" printed on Page 6. If possible, using a phone or tablet, play an instrumental version of the hymn, or some other soft music in the background. Ask students to think about all the things the hymn mentions that reflect holy living. In pairs ask students to find a comfortable place to sit together and share and pray. Invite students to tell their partners what they can do every day or every week of the year to become more holy. Invite partners to pray with and for each other.

Close your time in prayer with the whole class, reminding students that we all are still growing in grace and will make mistakes. But our striving for holiness grows out of our gratitude for what God has done for us through Jesus' resurrection.

### TAKE AWAY

Invite students to read or recite aloud **John 3:16** in unison. Encourage them to pray for one another this week as everyone strives to live a more holy life. Remind youth that if they ever need help, to call on their community of faith.

# Work It Out

As you work through today's lesson and read the Scriptures, complete the chart below.

Scripture or Show	Main Characters	Who Died?	Was God or Jesus Mentioned	Raised From the Dead or Resurrected?
1 Kings 17:17-24				
2 Kings 4:8-37				
John 11:17-44				
Matthew 27:51-54				
John 20:11-29				
TV Show or "Resurrection"				
Other Show?				

## Take Time to Be Holy

1. Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord; abide in him always, and feed on his word. Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak, forgetting in nothing his blessing to seek.

2. Take time to be holy, the world rushes on; spend much time in secret with Jesus alone. By looking to Jesus, like him thou shalt be; thy friends in thy conduct his likeness shall see.

3. Take time to be holy, let him be thy guide, and run not before him, whatever betide. In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord, and, looking to Jesus, still trust in his word.

4. Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul, each thought and each motive beneath his control. Thus led by his spirit to fountains of love, thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

—WORDS: William D. Longstaff, 1882

## IN THE BIBLE: READINGS FOR THE WEEK

**Monday: Read 2 Kings 4:8-37.**

How is being raised from the dead different from resurrection?

**Tuesday: Read Matthew 22:23-33.**

What did Jesus teach about resurrection?

**Wednesday: Read Luke 24:36-53.**

Why do you think the disciples did not recognize Jesus?

**Thursday: Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58.**

How would you explain resurrection to someone?

**Friday: Read John 3:1-17.**

How are you responding to God's gift of salvation and Jesus' invitation to believe?

**Saturday: Read 1 Peter 1:3-25.**

What does holiness look like in the lives of others? in your life?

## Inherit the Mirth



## WHAT'S TRENDING?

Can someone actually come back to life? Tweet or post your response using #resurrection to @AbingdonYouth or on Facebook: Abingdon Youth