**Artrageous**

**Jesus Dies and Rises Again**

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**BIG IDEA: Jesus is alive, so we can live a new life in Him.**

**BIBLE BASIS: Matthew 27:27-28:10**

**KEY VERSE: “Christ has been raised from the dead by the Father’s glory. And like Christ we also can live a new life.” Romans 6:4b (NIrV)**

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**LEADER DEVOTIONAL**

In recent years, there has been a movement of scientists and self-experimenters tinkering with life extension technology. In one interview, I heard a researcher declare that he intended to live for two hundred years. *Two hundred years!* Whether that is possible is up for debate, but, without a doubt, science, medicine, and technology have come a long way towards improving not only our longevity, but even the quality of our lives.

But no one has figured out how to *beat* death. Death still catches up to us—*every one* of us. Technological and scientific advancement will never remedy the *cause* of death. That is, sin.

When we sinned, we cut ourselves off from the God who gave us life, making death inevitable. We can’t hope to be released from death until we’ve first been released from sin. Enter Jesus. Jesus offers to trade places with us. He lived the life we were supposed to live. He died the death that we deserved to die. Then He was raised again and is alive today. When we take Him up on His offer, we get to enjoy the new life that flows out of a reconciled relationship with Him.

If we remain as we are, separated from Him by our sin, there is nothing that will save us. The only escape from death is the One who is, Himself, “the way, the truth, and the *life*.”

*Casey Jordan*

GO! Contributor

**LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING**

***How to Create a “Moment” that Draws Your Audience In***

Wouldn’t it be great if you could keep kids laser focused on every word you said during a lesson? *(Answer: Yes! That would be a super power greater than both invisibility and flight!)* Unfortunately, that’s often times not the case. No matter how dynamic a lesson is, most kids can only stay laser focused for so long. Part of being an effective communicator is choosing the most important “moment(s)” within a lesson and using your voice and body to package it in a way that draws in your audience. Here are a few tips on creating a “moment” so you can be certain your audience hears what matters most:

**Choose your “moment” wisely:** Any given lesson probably has one or two moments where you really want to draw their attention. Often times, the best place to look for that moment is at or near the end of the lesson when the “Big Idea” is being hammered home. The “Big Idea” is usually the moment the whole lesson has been leading to.

**Don’t make the “moment” too long.** For a kid, you might want to keep your moment to 2 or 3 high impact sentences.

**Pause before the “moment.”** A well placed pause can be very powerful. That short moment of silence can communicate to a kid that something different and interesting is about to be said or done.

**Use your voice.** One way to create a moment is to slow your pace down—give each word just a little extra emphasis. In addition, lower the volume of your voice to just above a whisper. A whisper can grab attention even more than shouting.

**Use your body.**  Using movement and levels can also help to create a powerful moment. As your voice begins to slow down and become quiet, move close to the kids. You may even choose to place yourself in the middle of your audience. Sit down or kneel so that you put yourself almost eye to eye with the kids. Slow down your body movement and hand gestures to match the pace and volume of your voice.

**SET UP INSTRUCTIONS**

Shhh…listen carefully. Do you hear that voice coming from inside of you? Does it have a slightly French accent? If so, it’s probably your inner artist. God has put one in all of us (maybe without the accent) and it’s screaming to get out! That is—until now! During “Artrageous,” kids will have a chance to unleash the artist inside of them by using all kinds of super fun art to tell the Easter story and to picture the outrageous love that Jesus has for us.

**Special “Artrageous” directions:**

* During the “Artrageous” storytelling, kids will be encouraged to use their artistic talents to create whatever comes to mind while listening to the Bible story. They’re free to create the people, the environment, or some special words.
* Below are suggestions for different artistic media to use during the “Artrageous” series. Choose one for each week. You can have the kids use the same medium every week or provide a different medium from week to week. Do not feel limited by the list. Feel free to choose any artistic medium that you can think of.

**Suggested artistic media:**

* Markers on paper
* Crayons on paper
* Colored pencils on paper
* Water color on paper
* Chalk on black construction paper
* Rainbow color scratch paper
* Playdough. (See Resource Folder for a DIY playdough recipe.)
* Pipe cleaners
* Wax Craft sticks
* Temper paint on canvas
* Add ons: stickers, stamps, craft sticks

**Do the following ahead of time:**

* Determine which artistic medium you’ll be using ahead of time and gather the materials.
* If you’re artistic medium uses paper as a “canvas,” consider what kind of paper you would like to use. Here are a few options:
	+ Give each kid their own piece of blank 8½ x 11 paper.
	+ Give each small group one or two pieces of poster board for all of the group to draw on.
	+ Have all of the kids in the room gather around one or two large pieces of butcher block paper to create one giant piece of story art.
	+ Other options include paper plates, brown bags, or construction paper
* Determine how you will display the art made during the lesson. Will they take home their art or do you want to display them for the duration of the unit?
* Put one “trick” or “re-lite” candle in each of the 6 different cupcakes. Put the cupcakes in a row along the length of a table. In addition, put an extra (7th) candle, a lighter and a cup of water on or near the table. Place the table in the teaching area.
* Place a box of Peeps® in the teaching area. Have one of the Peeps® ready to eat.
* Create an “Artrageous Mystery Box” by cutting the flaps off of a cardboard box. Print out the “Artrageous Mystery Box” sign and tape it to the box. Decorate the box in any other artistic way that you would like. When finished, hide the day’s art supplies underneath until the big reveal.
* Choose which of the GO! DEEP Reflect and Respond stations you would like to make available. Set out the appropriate materials for each of those stations.

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**CG: “Artrageous” title graphic**

**Sound: PLAY upbeat music as kids move to large group area**

**ARTRAGEOUS INTRO**

**Large Group Leader:** Can you believe it? The wait is over—it’s finally here! It’s Easter time! Easter is one of my favorite holidays. I mean—what’s there *not* to like about Easter? It has cute little bunnies, and Easter egg hunts, and candy—lots and LOTS of candy!! *(Hold stomach.)* Ugh—my stomach is growling for candy just talking about it.

I love all kinds of candy, but do you know what is one of my favorites? Peeps*®*! *(Pull out a Peep® marshmallow candy and take a bite. Say next line while gazing at the Peep® with mouth still full.)* Mmmm…there’s nothing quite like the marshmallowy goodness of a Peep®. *(Notice kids again.)* Oh—I’m sorry! I probably shouldn’t hog them all for myself. *(Pull out box of* Peeps®.*)* Does anybody want one too? *(Kids respond. Choose one kid and invite them to the teaching area.)*

I’d be happy to share these Peeps® with you, but they’re a special treat, so you’ve got to prove that you’re worthy first. I have a challenge for you.

Walk to the table with 6 cupcakes spread along the length of the table. Each cupcake will have one “trick” re-light candle in it. Use a lighter to light each of the 6 candles. Tell the kid that they have to blow out all 6 candles within 10 seconds to win the Peeps®. Say “go,” then prompt the audience to countdown from 10 with you. As the kid blows out each candle and moves on to the next, the candles will re-light. When the countdown reaches zero, prompt the kid to stop.

Oh no—what a bummer! You didn’t blow any of them out. *(Or “You only blew x number out.”)* I have to confess something, though. They’re trick candles. *(Blow one of the candles out again and watch as it re-lights.)* They’re made to re-light every time you blow one out. But because you were such a good sport, I think you deserve the Peeps®. *(Give kid the prize and dismiss to audience. Extinguish 5 of the 6 candles in a cup of water. Hold up the 6th cupcake with candle for the kids to see.)*

You know what—believe it or not, this candle gives us a great picture of what happened during the very first Easter. I’ll explain why in little bit, but first, I think it’s time for us to get “Artrageous!” Let’s count down from 5 and then I’ll reveal what today’s artrageous art supply will be. *(Countdown from 5 then lift the “Artrageous Mystery Box” to reveal the day’s artistic medium.)*

**CG: “Big Bible Story” graphic**

**THE BIG BIBLE STORY— JESUS DIES AND RISES AGAIN**

When you’re ready to begin, distribute the art materials to the kids. Before beginning the story, remind the kids that they can create anything that comes to mind while they listen. In addition to creating art during the telling of the story, there will be three 60-second “Art Breaks” where the story will pause, but the kids can continue creating.

Last week we heard how Jesus was arrested for saying that He was the Son of God, even though it was true. On the next day, a day that Christians call “Good Friday,” the soldiers who arrested Jesus began to make fun of Him and pretend like He was a king. They put a purple robe on Him. They put a stick in His hand like it was a scepter. They twisted thorns together in the shape of a crown and put it on His head so that the thorns cut into His skin. Then they whipped Him, hit Him, laughed at Him, and spit on Him.

When they were finished, the soldiers led Jesus to a place called “Golgotha,” which means, “Place of the Skull.” At Golgotha, they nailed Jesus’ hands and feet to a big wooden cross. Even though He had done nothing wrong, Jesus hung on the cross while people continued to laugh and yell at Him. While He hung there, He would have been bleeding and struggling to breath. Can you imagine how sad and painful that must have been? Finally, after many hours of suffering, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “It is finished!” Then it was silent. Jesus was dead. Let’s take a short “Artrageous Art Break.” You have 60 seconds to keep on creating before we jump back into the story. *(Pause from story while kids continue creating.)*

**VDO: PLAY “Art Break 60-second Countdown” video**

Afterwards, a man named Joseph, who was a follower of Jesus, took Jesus’ body down from the cross. Joseph wrapped the body in a cloth, then with the help of Jesus’ mom and friends, he placed Jesus in a dark tomb. The tomb was like a cave cut into the rock. Then they closed the tomb up by rolling a giant stone in front of the opening.

On Saturday, that very next day, the Jewish leaders who had Jesus killed began to worry that Jesus’ disciples would steal His body from the tomb to make people think He had been raised from the dead. So Pilate, the Roman Governor in charge, said to his guards, “Go. Make the tomb as secure as you can.” Immediately, the Roman guards went to the tomb and made sure that absolutely no one messed with it. At least, that was the plan! *(Pause for another art break.)*

**VDO: PLAY “Art Break 60-second Countdown” video**

Early the next day, on Sunday morning, Jesus’ mom and some other women went to see the tomb. When they got there, though, a huge earthquake shook everything. An angel of God came thundering down from heaven. With one little push, the angel rolled the giant stone away from the tomb like it was nothing and sat on it. The Bible says that the guards were so scared that they shook in their boots and fainted to the ground. Now the angel turned his attention toward Mary and her friends. He said to them, “Don’t be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here! He has risen, just as he said he would! Come and see the place where he was lying.”

When Mary and her friends looked inside of the tomb, it was empty! They were afraid, but so happy at the same time. They couldn’t wait to share the good news with Jesus’ disciples, so they ran as fast as they could to tell them about what they had seen. As they were running, though, something happened that they never expected. Suddenly, Jesus appeared right in front of them. “Hello!” he said. The women stopped dead in their tracks with mouths hanging open. They couldn’t believe it. The last time they had seen Jesus, He was dead. And now, three days later, He was alive again and talking to them. They went to Him, fell to the ground at His feet and worshipped Him. The angel of God was right—Jesus IS alive! *(Pause for a final art break.)*

**VDO: PLAY “Art Break 60-second Countdown” video**

At the end of the story, if time permits, choose some kids to show what they created and have them recount what was happening during that part of the story.

**CG: “Big Bible Story Questions” graphic**

**BIG BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS**

At the end of the Bible story have the kids turn briefly to their small groups and discuss the following questions: **For Younger Kids: What was your favorite part of this story? If you were with Jesus’ mom, what would you have said or done when you saw that Jesus was alive? For Older Kids: What does this story teach you about Jesus? Why do you think Jesus had to die on the cross?** After a few minutes, draw their attention back to the teaching area.

**CG: “Artrageous” title graphic**

**THE RE-LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

*(Place another re-lite candle in a cupcake.)* Do you remember the candles from earlier? I said that they give us a great picture of what happened during the very first Easter. Let me show you what I’m talking about. *(Light the candle and hold the cupcake up for kids to see.)* Jesus is sometimes called the “Light of the World.” In our story for today, Jesus’ enemies killed Him on a cross. It’s kind of like they blew the Light of the World out. *(Blow candle out. It will quickly relight.)* But did it stay out? *(Kids respond.)* No way! After 3 days in the tomb, Jesus, the Light of the World, came back to life—just like this candle. That’s what Easter is really all about. It’s not about the cute little bunnies, or the Easter egg hunts, or even the candy. Easter is about celebrating the Light that came back to life. It’s about celebrating that Jesus was dead, but now He’s alive!

That’s not all, though! If you’re a follower of Jesus, you’re kind of like this candle too. In fact, that’s what our Bible verse for today says. Let’s take a look at it. *(Encourage kids to open their Bible to Romans 6:4b. When ready, choose a kid to read the verse aloud or read it aloud yourself as kids follow along.)*

**CG: “Christ has been raised from the dead by the Father’s glory. And like Christ we also can live a new life.” Romans 6:4b**

When God raised Jesus from the dead, He raised us from the dead too. Now, some of you might be thinking, “Hold on. I don’t remember being dead.” Well—I hate to break it to you, but you were! Not for real dead—not dead and in a grave. The Bible says that before you followed Jesus, you were *spiritually* dead. It’s kind of like the light in your heart had been blown out and you were living away from God, surrounded by the darkness of your sin. *(Blow out candle again. It will quickly relight.)* But did it stay out? *(Kids respond.)* No way! When Jesus came back to life on that first Easter morning, He defeated sin. Now, if you follow Jesus, your sins are forgiven. The light in your heart burns bright for Jesus and you have a new life in Him. That’s the real Easter miracle! You were once dead in your sin, but now, thanks to Jesus, you are alive!

Close the GO! TELL IT Large group time by praying for the kids in whatever way the Holy Spirit prompts you. Following the prayer, explain to the kids which of the GO! DEEP Reflect and Respond Stations will be available. Remind them to move about the stations very quietly. Tell them they are free to respond to God in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads them, but if they need suggestions, some of the stations will give them ideas for how to pray, write, or draw. Give each child one “GO! Home” sheet and instruct them to take it with them to the stations. Place small group leaders at the different stations to quietly help the kids. The stations listed below are just the ones that have prompts that are specific to today’s lesson. For more instructions on how the GO! DEEP Reflect and Respond Stations work as well as a full list of possible stations, see the “GO! Guide.”

**CG: “Artrageous” title graphic**

**Music: (Optional) Play quiet reflective music**



**Prayer Station prompt:** Write a prayer to Jesus. Tell Him how it makes you feel to know that He is alive and that He has defeated sin.

**Journal Station prompt:** Imagine you were with the women who first saw Jesus alive. What would you have done? What would you have said to Jesus? Write about it.

**Bible Station prompt:** Read it for yourself: Matthew 27:27-28:10. Draw a picture of the story or write to God about your favorite part of the story. Tell Him why you liked it.

**Art Station prompt:**  Draw a picture of the empty tomb with the stone rolled away. Write the words, “Jesus is Alive!”