

Ready-to-use all-age service

Easter Sunday



MEETING AIM

To encounter the risen Jesus!



BIBLE PASSAGE

John 20:1–18



KEY VERSE

"Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: 'I have seen the Lord!' And she told them that he had said these things to her" (John 20:18).

+ PRAYER AND WORSHIP ACTIVITY

Option 1



You will need: simple songs that speak of Jesus' resurrection

Before the service, select some songs about Jesus' resurrection. Be careful to choose a good mix of songs, including ones the children, young people and adults will know.

Enjoy singing these songs together. Perhaps you could invite some of the children or young people to the front to teach 'their' songs to the rest of the congregation.

Option 2



You will need: photos of celebrities that have been doctored so it's difficult to make out who they are; pens; paper

Before the service, prepare your photos, making sure you have a mix of people the different generations will have heard of. Stick the photos around your meeting space.

As people arrive, give out pens and paper and invite them to guess who all the celebrities are. Once everyone has finished, go through the answers and ask for feedback on how easy it was to recognise someone they probably know well by sight.

+ STORY



You will need: a volunteer to play the part of Mary; biblical costume

It's important for your volunteer to be able to rehearse this role play before the service. Ideally, they would learn their lines to give a smooth performance. As you thank people for coming along to your special service, Mary Magdalene should rush on stage, dressed in biblical costume, and interrupt you.

Mary: Have you heard?

Leader: Heard? Heard what?

Mary: It's Jesus!

Leader: It's Jesus what?

Mary: JESUS! HE'S ALIVE!

Leader: I'm sorry, I think I'm missing something. Who are you?

Mary: Oh, sorry, I'm getting carried away. My name's Mary Magdalene.

Leader: Really? The Mary Magdalene?

Mary: Well, I think so. I'm not sure how many other people are called Mary Magdalene!

Leader: This is great! Welcome, Mary! What's all this about Jesus? He's alive?

Mary: Yes! Yes! He was dead, but now he's alive! I've seen him with my own eyes!

Leader: Woah! Slow down. Start from the beginning...

Mary: Yes, that's a very good place to start. Or so I hear. Right. The beginning. Well, a week ago, Jesus had arrived in Jerusalem to the shouts of the crowd. Everyone welcomed him into the city, waving palm branches and cheering and shouting... Jesus was on a donkey, which seemed a bit strange, but it showed everyone that he was a king!

Leader: I think I heard about that. Not everyone was so happy with Jesus, were they?

Mary: No, not at all. All the religious leaders were very jealous that people were listening to him. He made them look stupid in front of the crowds and they wanted him dead!

Leader: Dead? Really?

Mary: Yes! They started plotting to kill Jesus. And they even recruited one of his friends, Judas, to help.

Leader: No!

Mary: I know! The long and the short of it was that Jesus was arrested and put to death; crucified, even though he had done nothing wrong. We took his body down from the cross and put him in a tomb. Well, this morning I went to the tomb to put spices on Jesus' body, but when I got there the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty.

Leader: Where had Jesus' body gone?

Mary: I didn't know, so I went to get Peter and John. They came to see, but they didn't know what had happened either. They left as confused as when they'd arrived. But then two men in white – angels, I suppose – appeared.

Leader: Wait a minute... you saw angels? This morning?

Mary: Yes, I promise you! They asked me why I was crying, and I told them: "Well... Jesus!" Then I realised there was someone standing behind me. I thought it was the gardener at first. But then he said my name and I knew who it was.

Leader: Jesus!

Mary: Yes, Jesus! He's alive! I'm just on my way to tell all his friends all about it! I can't wait to see their faces. Bye!

She rushes off.

Leader: Bye Mary!

+ REFLECTIVE RESPONSE

Option 1



You will need: reflective music and the means to play it

Play the music and lead the congregation in this short meditation:

Imagine you are standing next to the tomb. The stone is not there and the tomb is empty. Then imagine you hear a voice behind you, calling your name. It's Jesus.

You turn around and see him. What do you want to ask him? Imagine you're asking him that question. What does he say in reply? *Leave some time for people to think about this.*

Imagine you're having a conversation with Jesus now. What does he say to you? *Leave some time for people to imagine this.*

When you leave church today, what thoughts and ideas are you going to take away with you? *Leave some time for people to think about this.*

Option 2



You will need: art materials; craft resources; Bibles; children's Bibles; building blocks; stones

Spread out your resources at the back of your meeting space and invite the congregation to go and choose something they'd like to use in their response. They could paint a picture or make a craft, read or just be quiet. Encourage people to use this time to respond to what God is saying to them.

Have some helpers to assist people as they decide which resources to use.

+ GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Divide into mixed-age groups and discuss these questions:

- What do you think Mary said to the disciples when she went back?
- What would you have said to Jesus if you were Mary?
- What do you think is most important about this story?
- What difference does the story make to you?

ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.