

“Step Inside the Empty Tomb”

by
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What This script presents options to go simple or go all-out to bring the story of Jesus' empty tomb to life. As an interactive skit, the audience gets to step inside the empty tomb with Mary Magdalene after Jesus is crucified and has risen. They learn that God is always there for us when we put our faith in him.

Special Word of the Day: Faith.

“God is always there for us when we put our faith in him.”

Themes: Empty tomb, Mary Magdalene, Easter, Risen, Jesus, Faith, Kids Ministry

Who Mary Magdalene

When Bible Times

Wear (Props) A room or large space is decorated with elements to resemble the inside of the empty tomb. Mary Magdalene should wear a simple tunic and head covering. She carries a box of spices.

Why John 20:1-18

How Transform a classroom or large space into the empty tomb! For ideas on how to Go Simple! or Go Big! with your tomb continue reading below:

Go Simple! To create the empty tomb you will need large pieces of cardboard (like from an appliance box) opened flat, paint, tape, and a box cutter or sharp blade. Cut and tape your cardboard pieces together to resemble the exterior shape of a rocky cave with a hole cut out of the middle to serve as the entryway. Reserve one large piece of cardboard and cut it into a circle shape. Paint the cave and rock grey (or leave them brown if there is no printing on your cardboard). On the cave, use black paint to paint sock shapes on the exterior of the cardboard for texture and visual interest. Here and there, throughout the rocks you have painted, use green paint to paint small shoots of green plants that have grown up around the rocks.

Place the exterior of the cave near the doorway to your room so that the entrance to the cave lines up with the entrance of your room. Roll your “rock” next to the entrance. You can also add additional artificial plants to the exterior of your tomb if you have them. If you are unable to obtain large pieces of carboard, you could also drape grey, brown, or off-white sheets from the ceiling to the floor in front of the entrance to your room, leaving an opening. Smaller carboard pieces could be taped together to create a rock large enough to roll in front of your opening. Inside the tomb, using grey, brown, or off-white sheets or clean canvas drop cloths, cover the interior walls so it looks like stone. At the center of your performance space, line up several carboard boxes (taped into their box shape) to construct the stone burial slab. Paint it grey or cover it tightly with a grey sheet. Make sure there are no loose ends, as you will also be putting white linen on top of the slab and want the linen to be visible if you are using a cloth sheet over the carboard.

Go Big! Using large 4'x8' sheets of foam insulation panels (they range in thickness from ½" to 3" thick), depending on your budget, carve out the exterior of a cave and large stone. You will need a serrated knife, retractable box cutter, or foam cutting tools for the carving. Using shades of grey, black and white paint, add texture and definition to the outside of your cave. You could also use additional foam or carboard pieces to create 3D rocky crevices and exterior boulders. Place the exterior of the cave near the doorway to your room so that the entrance to the cave lines up with the entrance of your room. Roll your “rock” next to the entrance. Add additional plants outside of your room as well as a large piece of green turf in front of the cave. Inside the tomb, line all of the walls using foam sheets texture painted in shades of grey, white and black to resemble rock. At the center of your performance space, construct a burial slab using foam sheets attached together with packing tape or screws to form a large rectangle. Texture paint your slab to match the interior of your room. Place pieces of white linen on top of slab.

Note to performer: If you've ever worked with kids before, you know they're unpredictable. They're going to throw out answers and ask questions all throughout your monologue, and that's great! That means they're with you. Be ready to roll with it and answer crazy questions. It's important to have other children's workers there to thwart any unruly behavior or a child that is monopolizing the time.

Time Approximately 5-7 minutes

Audience is brought to outside of tomb. Once everyone is settled, Mary Magdalene emerges from the entrance of the tomb, holding spices.

Mary: *(excitedly)* Hello everyone! My name is Mary Magdalene and I have the most amazing news! Does everyone know where we are right now?

Waits for children to respond.

That's right. We're outside the tomb where Jesus was buried. You're probably wondering why I'm so happy when my Lord and my friend Jesus was buried right here in this tomb. *(Leans in, towards audience, as if letting them in on a secret)* You're never going to believe it, but something extraordinary has happened here today. *(Looks around)* I could tell you about it, but why don't I just show you? *(Indicates tomb)*

Follow me inside the tomb and I'll tell you all about it.

Once everyone is inside...

Now remember, we are inside the burial tomb of Jesus, so we must remain quiet and respectful while I tell you my story. *(Holds up spice box)* Does anyone know what I've brought along with me? *(Calls on children as they raise their hands to give responses)* I've brought aromatic spices with me to anoint Jesus's body with. It's the best way I know how to honor my Lord and my friend. What ways do you honor Jesus in your lives?

Calls on children as they raise their hands to give responses.

Those are all great ideas! I'm sure that Jesus is very happy with all the ways you honor him. When I arrived here, I was expecting to have to find a few strong men to roll the stone away from the entrance, but do you know what I found instead?

Calls on children as they raise their hands to give responses.

That's right! The stone had been rolled aside! But that wasn't the most remarkable part.

Crossing toward the door, then reenacting her walk into the tomb during the next few lines.

After I got over my surprise at seeing the stone rolled aside, I slowly made my way inside. *(Stops at burial slab)* I came here to the spot where the body of Jesus was laid after he was taken down off the cross and wrapped in linens. I expected to be able to anoint his body with these spices but as I approached his burial bed do you know what I saw?

(Turns back to audience, excitedly) He was gone! The body of Jesus was gone. But where was his body? Did someone take it? Were those of us that were followers of Jesus safe? So, I did the only thing I could think of and ran to find Simon Peter. Does anyone know who Peter is?

Calls on children as they raise their hands to give responses.

Peter is one of the twelve disciples and one of Jesus’s closest friends. I knew he would be the best one to help me. I said to him, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb and we don’t know where they put him!” So Peter ran straight to the tomb and saw that what I said was true—the tomb was empty! But he didn’t yet know what that meant. What would you have thought if you came to the tomb and saw that it was empty?

Calls on children as they raise their hands to give responses.

Then you can understand how confused and upset we were. We thought someone had taken the body of our Lord and our friend. We were frightened. *(Crosses toward entrance of tomb)* When I arrived back at the tomb, Peter had gone home. But I stayed outside and cried. How could someone do this? How could someone steal the body of Jesus? *(Wipes at her eyes)* After a few minutes I wiped away my tears and took one last look inside the tomb. And do you know what I saw?

Calls on children as they raise their hands to give responses. She crosses to the burial slab.

Two angels! One here at the head. *(Indicates head of slab)* And one here at the feet *(indicates the foot of the slab)*. Now tell me, how would you feel if you saw two angels sitting here where Jesus’s body should be?

Calls on children as they raise their hands to give responses.

I agree! I was shocked. I’m sure the angels could see my surprise. But they also saw that I had been crying, so they asked me, “Woman, why are you weeping?” So I replied, “They have taken my Lord away and I don’t know where they have put him!” As soon as I said this I turned around, and guess what I saw?

Calls on children as they raise their hands to give responses.

A man! I figured he must be the gardener—the one who looks after the grounds and gardens around the tomb. This man said to me, “Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?” In that moment I thought maybe he had been the one to take Jesus’s body away, so I replied, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will take him.” How do you think I was feeling in that moment?

Calls on children as they raise their hands to give responses.

I was feeling a lot of things, upset, sad, angry. I thought this man had taken my Lord and my friend. And then the most remarkable thing happened. The man said simply, "Mary." And in that moment, I knew exactly who he was. Do *you* know who he was?

Calls on children as they raise their hands to give responses.

It was Jesus! Once he said my name my eyes were open wide, and I could see him standing there just as clear as I see all of you here before me now. *(Excitedly)* I was overjoyed! Here was my Lord and my friend, alive once more! Jesus told me to go back and tell the disciples what I had seen! And in that moment, I knew everything he told us would happen had come true—God's plan was being fulfilled! Jesus had died and come back to life, just as he told us he would. Jesus had risen! *(Smiling)* That makes me so happy just to say that aloud. Can we say that all together? *(All together)* Jesus has risen! That's right. Now let's try that even louder, and with more excitement. *(All together)* Jesus has risen! Great job everyone! That's right, Jesus *has* risen.

Now that I know that what God promised has happened, I don't feel so scared anymore. God wants us to put our faith in Him. He is always there for us and He keeps His promises. And just as Jesus wants me to go back and tell the disciples that he has risen, it's your job to spread the good news of what happened here so that others can know Jesus and they can also have the love and peace that only Jesus can give.

Can you do that? Can you join me in spreading this very important message today? *(Waits for children to respond)* Wonderful! Now does everyone remember the amazing news we have to share? All you have to say is, Jesus has risen! Let's try that one more time, with lots of excitement. *(All together)* Jesus has risen! Very good!

Now I'd better hurry back and tell the disciples what Jesus told me. And you all better hurry so you can spread the message that Jesus has risen! Goodbye!

End of scene.