Year 1, Easter
**Bible Basis:**

**Bible Truth:**
We can find God when we need forgiveness.

**Memory Verse:**
Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3).

*Note:* Early elementary verse in **bold** type.

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**GET SET!**
(Lesson Preparation)

- Print today’s Bible memory verse on a poster board: Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (John 3:3). Hang the poster at the front of the classroom.
- Draw and cut out from butcher paper two separate large cross shapes.
- Create a set of cards that spell out the verse for the Hide ‘n’ Seek activity. Write in large letters, one or two words per card.
- Photocopy *Palm Sunday ZipLine* for each child.
- Photocopy *Palm Sunday Lookout Card* for each helper.
- Mount one of the butcher paper crosses on the wall or on an easel for the Welcome Time Activity if using it.
- Make tape lines at either end of the playing area if using Activity #1.
- Set out the treasure box *(optional)*.
- Set up snack or outside play activities if you include these items in your children’s ministry.

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**PASSWORD, PLEASE!**
(Welcome and Bible Connection)

- **Objective:** To excite children’s interest and connect their life experiences with the Bible Truth, children will create a self-portrait and talk about how Jesus knows and loves us individually.

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**You Will Need:**
- treasure map mounted on a wall
- *Use the Clues* poster with map clues
- 1 poster board
- butcher paper
- index cards
- markers
- paper
- glue sticks
- large cross drawn on butcher paper
- half sheets of black construction paper
- double-stick tape
- *Palm Sunday ZipLine* home-connection page
- *Palm Sunday Lookout Card*
- *(optional)* treasure box
- *(optional)* snack: pretzel sticks, mini-marshmallows
- *(optional)* Activity #1: flying disks
- *(optional)* Activity #2: self-hardening clay or balsa strips, glue, sharp pointed tool, plastic lanyard or leather strips, scissors, paint and brushes

When you see this icon, it means preparation will take more than five minutes.
Sharing Time and Bible Connection

When everyone has arrived, call children to the lesson area and welcome them. Introduce today’s lesson by discussing these questions with your students. As you talk, give every child the opportunity to say something.

- What does it mean to sacrifice something? (to give it up for the good of someone else)
- What are some things you or someone you know has sacrificed? (giving up free time to help someone, not eating dessert so someone else could have it, letting someone else take your place in line while you go to the back, etc.)
- What’s the biggest sacrifice you think you could make for someone you love?

After this sharing time, help your students connect their discussion to the Bible story they are about to hear from Luke 22 and 23:

Way before you and I were born, God had a plan for us. He knew we would need forgiveness for all we would do wrong. His plan meant someone had to be the sacrifice for us. Let’s find out what God’s plan was.

CLIMB IN! (Bible Discover and Learn Time)

Objective: Children will study Luke 22 and 23 to understand that Jesus suffered and died as their personal sacrifice for sin.

Materials: large cross drawn on butcher paper, half sheets of black construction paper, double-stick tape, Use the Clues! poster with map clues

Post the cross at the front of the story area. Today is Palm Sunday, the day we celebrate when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. The people in Jerusalem were so excited to see Jesus that they sang praises and waved palm branches. But their excitement didn’t last long. You see, Jesus came to Jerusalem for a reason, and it wasn’t the reason the people were hoping for. They had been waiting for someone to save them from the evil Roman government. They hoped Jesus was that person. But Jesus came to save them from something else: their sins.

Jesus did some amazing, exciting things while he was living on earth. He made many sick people well. And he even brought dead people back to life, like Lazarus. But of all the things Jesus did while he was living on earth, they weren’t the main reason he came.
Hand out a half sheet of black paper to each child. This black paper will help us see how much Jesus suffered because he loves us. As you hear what bad things happened to Jesus in this story, tear off a piece of paper. You can make a pile in front of you as you listen.

Review the Last Supper briefly with children if you feel they need a reminder. After Jesus ate the Last Supper with his disciples, Jewish leaders arrested him. Prompt kids to tear off a piece of black paper. As the story progresses, continue to prompt them as needed. They wanted to kill Jesus because they were jealous and afraid of him. Everything that was happening was part of God’s plan to save you and me from the punishment for our sins, or the bad things we do. Ask children for examples of sin.

After Jesus was arrested, he was treated really badly. Soldiers beat him. They spit on him and called him names and made fun of him. No one stood up for him or said that Jesus didn’t deserve any of this wrong treatment. The Jewish leaders wanted to find a person in power who could say that Jesus was a criminal and should be killed. Not one powerful person could find anything at all wrong in what Jesus had done. Do you know why? Allow responses. Because Jesus had never sinned! He was God, so he was without any sin. That’s what makes him different from you and me. We’ve all done things wrong. Ask children for examples.

Finally, the Jewish leaders got their way. Roman soldiers led Jesus to a hill with two criminals. They made Jesus carry a really heavy wooden cross that was bigger than he was. Someone had to help him because it was so heavy. The soldiers didn’t believe Jesus was God’s Son. Jesus was willing to let this happen because he loves you and me so much. Jesus could have stopped it whenever he wanted to, but he knew this was the way we could be saved from dying for our own wrongs.

When Jesus died, God was so sad he made the sun stop shining for a while. He caused an earthquake to shake the earth, and he made a huge curtain in the Jewish temple tear in half, right down the middle.

See all those black scraps in front of you? Jesus suffered a lot because you and I have done wrong and we need forgiveness. We’ve done lots more wrong than just that many bits of paper. Let’s add those black pieces to the cross. Direct children to come up in small groups to stick their scraps on the cross. You and helpers should also stick on scraps.

As sad as this day was when Jesus died, we’re going to find out something wonderful next week. Jesus didn’t stay dead! We’ll find out more about that next time.

As we look at our cross and see all the blackness covering it, we can imagine how much Jesus suffered. We all need forgiveness for all the wrong things we’ve done. That’s why God sent his only Son, Jesus, to die in our place—so we could have help out of the dark Cave of Sinfulness. God wants to give us a light to help us out of that cave. We can find God when we need forgiveness.

Close the story time with prayer, attentive to the Holy Spirit’s directing. Pray that those children who haven’t decided to ask Jesus to forgive their sins will see how much he loves them and why he died for them.

Direct kids’ attention to the Use the Clues! poster where map clues are displayed. Which clue did we discover today? Help children decide that today’s lesson was about the “We can find God when we need forgiveness” clue. Ask a volunteer to take it off the board and attach it to the map.

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**USE THE CLUES!**

(Bible Review)

Okay, let’s see what you remember.

- **Why was Jesus arrested?** (Jewish leaders felt jealous and afraid of him, they wanted to get rid of him)
- **How did Jesus suffer before he died?** (he was beaten, spit on, called names, whipped, made to carry the heavy cross)
Why did Jesus die? (to pay for the sins we’ve done, to give us a chance to spend forever in heaven)

How do we decide that we want Jesus’ suffering and death to be the payment for our sin? (we realize we can’t fix our sins ourselves, tell Jesus we’re sorry for all our wrongs, accept his forgiveness, learn to live life God’s way)

According to the memory verse, what needs to happen so we can live in heaven forever? (we need to be born again, be saved, accept Christ, choose to follow Jesus)

Every bit of punishment and suffering that Jesus felt wasn’t what he deserved. You and I deserve the punishment because we have all sinned. God allowed the Jewish leaders and Roman soldiers to hurt Jesus and kill him because he loves you and me so much. God is always there when we need forgiveness. We just need to believe in and accept the sacrifice Jesus made for our sins.

At this point each week, trace the treasure map clues to help children review the Bible Truth and remember ways they can find God.

**HIDE ’N’ SEEK**

*Scripture Memory*

**Objective:** Children will hide God’s Word in their hearts for guidance, protection, and encouragement.

**Materials:** verse phrase cards

Lay out the verse cards on the floor in the shape of a cross. Direct attention to the verse poster and read the words as you point to them: *Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again”* (John 3:3).

Have children take turns reading the words in the cross as you direct by pointing. Remove a card or two and have the group recite the verse. Continue this way, removing (or letting volunteers remove) a card or two. Once the cards are all gone, give children opportunities to put them back in order.

**PRAYER HIDEAWAY**

**Objective:** Children will explore and practice prayer for themselves in small groups.

**Materials:** Copies of Palm Sunday Lookout Card for each adult or teen helper

Break into small groups of three to five children. Assign a teen or adult helper to each small group and give each helper a copy of *Palm Sunday Lookout Card* (page 9) with ideas for group discussion and prayer.

**TREETOP TREATS: Cross Sticks**

*Optional Snack*

**Materials:** pretzel sticks, mini-marshmallows

Provide each child with a small handful of pretzel sticks and several mini-marshmallows. They can use the marshmallows to join pretzel segments together to make symbols (such as crosses and hearts) that go with today’s story.

*Note:* Always be aware of children with food allergies and have another option on hand if necessary.
Objective: Children will have opportunities to show how the lesson works in their lives through activities and home-connection pages.

Some children's ministries may allow children to play outside at this point. If yours does not, choose one of the following activities.

### Lifesaver Game

**Materials:** 1 flying disk per team

Divide into teams. Each team chooses one player as the "lifesaver." Give each lifesaver a flying disk and send them to the opposite end of the play area. The rest of the teams remain behind the line on their end of the room. **All of your team, except the person with the flying disk, needs to be saved. The only way to be saved is for the person with the life ring (flying disk) to pull you to the other side of the room. You have to hold onto the life ring to get there.** Start the game at your signal; each lifesaver will race to his or her team and choose a player to take hold of the life ring. Together they'll race back to the other end.

**How is this game like what Jesus did for us?** (we all need to be saved, and only he can save us)

### Cross Necklaces

**Materials:** self-hardening clay or balsa strips, glue, sharp pointed tool, plastic lanyard or leather strips, scissors, paint and brushes

Guide students in forming a cross from self-hardening clay or two lengths of balsa wood. Painting is an option if there’s time. Make a hole near the top of the cross. Fold the lanyard/leather in half; thread the loop through the hole, back to front, and pull the loose ends through, then tighten. Knot the ends together. Students can wear as a necklace or hang in their rooms as a reminder.

### ZipLine

(Home-Connection Page)

Let children who brought back a signed pass from last week’s home-connection page choose a prize from the treasure box. **Don’t forget to do the activities on your ZipLine page this week and bring back a signed ticket. That way, you can take a trip to the treasure box!**

Distribute the home-connection pages and cross necklaces (if made) just before children leave.
Dear Parents:

This week children learned from Luke 22:47—23:49 that we can find God when we need forgiveness. God sent his only Son, Jesus, to be the ultimate sacrifice for our sins so we can be forgiven.

Share with your child that everyone has done wrong things and needs to be forgiven. Give him or her a chance to share examples of sin, such as lying, disobeying Mom and Dad, whining, etc. Then talk about the fact that the only way we can receive forgiveness for these sins is by telling God we’re sorry for the bad things we’ve done and accepting the sacrifice Jesus made for us. If your child has not accepted God’s forgiveness yet, he or she may have questions about doing that now.

End this time together with the way children prayed in class. Encourage your child to add his or her own prayers to each section.

- Praise God for sending his Son, Jesus, to die for our sins.
- Ask for God to remind you of Jesus’ sacrifice all through this coming week.
- Confess all the wrong you’ve done this week.
- Thank God for making a way for us to receive forgiveness through Jesus.

If you have any questions about this week’s lesson or God’s plan for our forgiveness, please feel free to discuss them with anyone in the children’s ministry program.

Hooray! You’ve discovered another clue on your journey to find God. The people who waved palm branches when Jesus rode into Jerusalem thought Jesus came to save them from the Romans. But he really came to save them from their sins! He came to save us too.

When we confess our sins and accept that Jesus died on the cross for us, God’s forgiveness is like a light that can lead us out of the dark Cave of Sinfulness.

Color and cut out the clue. Make the palm branch more interesting by taping or gluing a real leaf over it. Then glue the clue over the Palm Sunday Lesson circle on your treasure map.

Memory Verse

Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (John 3:3).

Note: Early elementary verse in bold type.
This week your group learned from Luke 22:47—23:49 that we can find God when we need forgiveness. Lead your group in prayer in the following way:

**Note:** Be sensitive to the possibility that one or more children may be ready to pray to accept Christ.

- **Praise.** God sent his Son, Jesus, to suffer and die for our sins. Have children praise God for sacrificing his Son so we can be forgiven.
- **Ask.** Jesus sacrificed his life for us. If you want to ask God to forgive your sins and become your Savior and friend, you can do that right now. Pray a simple prayer of salvation that children can pray aloud or silently.
- **Confess.** Even after we’ve trusted Jesus to be our Savior, we still do wrong sometimes. We can tell God about what we’ve done wrong this week and ask him to clean away those wrongs and give us a new start. Lead children in a prayer of confession.
- **Thank.** Jesus suffered and died so every person could be with God for eternity. Allow children to thank God for preparing a place for them.

Remember that no child should be forced to pray, but do encourage and invite each one. When you’ve finished praying, you can quietly talk to the children in your group until the next activity.
We can find God when we need forgiveness.

Palm Sunday Map Clue
Bible Basis:
Mark 15:42—16:8; Luke 23:50—24:12

Bible Truth:
We find God when things seem hopeless.

Easter Sunday Lesson 11
Jesus—Alive Again!

Memory Verse: If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).

Note: Early elementary verse in bold type.

GET SET!
(Lesson Preparation)

- Print today’s Bible memory verse on a poster board: If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9). Hang the poster at the front of the classroom.
- Fill the plastic eggs as listed below. Write each egg’s number on the outside.
  - Egg #1: several toothpicks wrapped in linen cloth or paper towel
  - Egg #2: whole spices such as cloves or cinnamon sticks
  - Egg #3: clay or play dough
  - Egg #4: leave empty
  - Egg #5: bright white piece of cloth and piece of gold cording
  - Egg #6: paper with “RISEN” written on it
  - Egg #7: folded piece of linen cloth or paper towel
  - Place eggs in a bowl or basket when numbered and filled.
- Photocopy Easter ZipLine for each child.
- Photocopy Easter Lookout Card for each helper.
- Set out the treasure box (optional).
- Make homemade crispy rice marshmallow treats, shaping the warm confection into three-sided “tomb” shapes for each child, with an opening about marshmallow size.
- Set up snack or outside play activities if you include these items in your children’s ministry

You Will Need:
- treasure map mounted on wall
- Use the Clues! poster with map clues
- 1 poster board
- foam, golf, and tennis balls; baseballs
- 7 plastic take-apart eggs
- Bibles
- whole cloves or cinnamon sticks
- toothpicks
- string
- linen scraps
- breath mints or mint candy
- short nails
- clay or play dough
- blindfold
- bowl or basket
- white piece of cloth
- gold cording
- paper towels
- paper with “RISEN” written on it
- Easter ZipLine home-connection page
- Easter Lookout Card
- (optional) treasure box
- (optional) snack: crispy rice treats in tomb shapes, large marshmallows
- (optional) Activity #1: a large plastic garbage can with lid per team, duct tape, plastic traffic-type cones or chairs
- (optional) Activity #2: chairs, sheets, blankets, or tarps

When you see this icon, it means preparation will take more than five minutes.
**PASSWORD, PLEASE!**
*(Welcome and Bible Connection)*

- **Objective:** To excite children’s interest and connect their life experiences with the Bible Truth, children will experiment with different equipment and talk about what’s powerful.

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**Welcome Time Activity: Power Plays**

- **Materials:** foam, golf, or tennis balls; baseballs

As children arrive, invite them to a table where they can experiment with blowing different types of balls across the table to see how much power each one requires. Talk about powerful things like volcanoes, superheroes, and huge earth-moving vehicles as you focus on the theme of power.

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**Sharing Time and Bible Connection**

When everyone has arrived, call children to the lesson area and welcome them. Introduce today’s lesson by discussing these questions with the students. As you talk, give every child the opportunity to say something.

- **What’s the most powerful thing you’ve ever seen?**
- **What gives something or someone power?** (muscles, steam, fuel, energy)
- **How powerful do you think God is?**

After this sharing time, help your students connect their discussion to the Bible story they’re about to hear from Mark 15—16 and Luke 23—24:

> When Jesus died on the cross, his disciples felt very sad. Their leader was dead, and things seemed hopeless. But they soon found out that God had the power to take care of this situation, even though they thought there was no hope. Let’s find out what happened.

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**CLIMB IN!**

*(Bible Discover and Learn Time)*

- **Objective:** Children will study Mark 15—16 and Luke 23—24 to find out how Jesus came back to life after he was crucified.
- **Materials:** 7 numbered, filled plastic eggs (see Get Set!); Bibles; Use the Clues! poster with map clues

Place the bowl of eggs in front of you or, if seated in a circle, in the center.

Ask an older child to pair up with one or more younger children. Form small groups, each with one or more Bibles. Older children can help younger ones find the passages as needed. For each passage, ask a volunteer to read the verse(s), then other children in the group will find and open the corresponding egg. The group with the egg can try to explain how the contents relate to the verse. Discuss the question after each Scripture text.
Egg #1: Luke 23:50–53  What do you think Joseph believed about Jesus?
Egg #2: Luke 23:54–56  What were these women planning to do with their spices?
Egg #3: Luke 24:1–2  Have child with egg use his or her index finger and thumb to form a “hole” to the create the “tomb.” Push the clay “stone” to close the entrance of the “tomb.” Who moved the stone?
Egg #4: Luke 24:3  Why is this egg empty?
Egg #5: Luke 24:4–5  Where did these men come from?
Egg #6: Luke 24:6–7  What had happened by the third day Jesus was in the tomb?
Egg #7: Luke 24:8–12  What amazed Peter?

Lots of people were surprised at what happened the third day after Jesus was crucified. They thought there was no hope to ever see Jesus again. But God had the power to raise Jesus from the dead—and he did! Before we come to know Jesus, we are all in a hopeless situation because of our sin. But when we ask Jesus to come into our life, we have hope and a future in heaven! God sent Jesus to die for our sins and rise again so we can have this hope.

If God can do something as amazing as raising Jesus from the dead, don’t you think he has the power to help us when other things seem hopeless? He sure can! When we have a problem that we don’t know how to fix, we can talk to God and ask him to help us. He has the power to help us out of the Sea of Hopelessness when we feel like we’re drowning. We can find God when situations seem hopeless.

Direct kids’ attention to the Use the Clues! poster where map clues are displayed. Which clue did we discover today? Help children decide that today’s lesson was about the “We find God when things seem hopeless” clue. Ask a volunteer to take it off the board and attach it to the map.

USE THE CLUES!
(Bible Review)

Okay, let’s see what you remember.

- Where was Jesus buried after he was taken from the cross? (in a tomb carved out of a cliff or hill)
- How do you think Joseph, the women, and Peter felt when they thought Jesus was dead? (sad, lonely, scared, confused, hopeless)
- How did they feel at the tomb? (terrified, surprised, excited, happy, amazed)
- Who had the power to bring Jesus to life? (God)
- What does the memory verse say we must do to be saved? (confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead)

At this point each week, trace the treasure map clues to help children review the Bible Truth and remember ways they can search for God. Review all weeks up to this week.

HIDE ’N’ SEEK
(Scripture Memory)

Objective: Children will hide God’s Word in their hearts for guidance, protection, and encouragement.

Read this week’s memory verse from the poster. Point to each word as you read it:
If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).

Ask the children to help you create gestures and motions to go with the verse. After practicing the motions together as you say the verse, try replacing the words with gestures, such as “mouth,” “heart,” and “raised.” Ask various groups (girls, boys, second-graders, blondes, etc.) to recite the verse with the actions.

**PRAYER HIDEAWAY**

- **Objective:** Children will explore and practice prayer for themselves in small groups.
- **Materials:** Copies of Easter Lookout Card for each adult or teen helper

Break into small groups of three to five children. Assign a teen or adult helper to each small group and give each helper a copy of *Easter Lookout Card* (page 17) with ideas for group discussion and prayer.

**TREETOP TREATS: Empty Tombs** *(Optional Snack)*

- **Materials:** crispy rice marshmallow treats in tomb shapes, large marshmallows

Give each child a “tomb” and marshmallow. Ask them to show you the main facts about the resurrection story, using their snack as props.

**Note:** Always be aware of children with food allergies and have another option on hand if necessary.
APPLICATION

Objective: Children will have opportunities to show how the lesson works in their lives through activities and home-connection pages.

Some children's ministries may allow children to play outside at this point. If yours does not, choose one of the following activities.

Tombstone Roll

Materials: 1 large plastic garbage can with lid per team, duct tape, plastic traffic-type cones or chairs

Set up a relay with traffic cones or chairs. Create an oval course (depending on room size). Firmly attach the trash can lid with duct tape. Depending on the size of the trash can, have one child or a pair working together push and roll the can around the traffic-cone course and back to the starting point. To make the game more challenging, have the cones/chairs in a spaced-out row, with players maneuvering the can back and forth between the cones to reach the end before rolling it straight back to the starting line.

Tomb Building

Materials: chairs; blankets, sheets, or tarps

Provide sheets, blankets, or tarps and let the children build a cave-like tomb. Large classes can divide into smaller groups to build separate tombs. Use chairs as the structures on which you drape the sheets. Have children create a way to close their tomb. They can dramatize the Bible story if there’s time.

ZIPLINE

(Home-Connection Page)

Let children who brought back a signed pass from last week’s home-connection page choose a prize from the treasure box. Show ZIPLINE home-connection pages. When you take this ZIPLINE page home each week and do the activities, your parents can sign the Club Pass to show that you finished the work. Bring the signed pass back to choose a prize from the treasure box.

Distribute the home-connection pages just before children leave.
Dear Parents:

This week children learned from Mark 15:42—16:8 and Luke 23:50—24:12 that we can find God when things seem hopeless. After Jesus died on the cross, he rose again on the third day so we can have hope.

Talk with your child about Jesus’ death and resurrection. How does he or she feel about what Jesus did to give us hope? Ask your child to tell you about some situations in his or her life that seem hopeless. The same power God used to raise Jesus from the dead can also help your child through any tough situation. All he or she needs to do is ask.

End this time together with the way children prayed in class. Encourage your child to add his or her own prayers to each section.

- **Praise** God for raising Jesus from the dead.
- **Ask** for God to show your child his power when things seem hopeless.
- **Confess** the times that you or your child have forgotten to talk to God when things get tough.
- **Thank** God for his amazing power.

If you have any questions about this week’s lesson or God’s plan of salvation, please feel free to discuss them with anyone in the children’s ministry program.

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**Great!** You’ve found another clue in your search for God. When Jesus died on the cross and rose again, he gave us a way to get out of the hopelessness of our sins. If we ask for his forgiveness for the bad things we do and believe in what he did for us on the cross, we will be part of his family. He wants to help us out of the Sea of Hopelessness in other areas of our lives too. We just need to ask him.

Color and cut out the clue below. Decorate the sky with glitter glue or color it with bright crayons to show how beautiful and amazing Jesus’ resurrection was. Then glue the clue over the Easter Lesson circle on your treasure map.

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**Memory Verse**

If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).

*Note:* Early elementary verse in **bold** type.
This week your group learned from Mark 15:42—16:8 and Luke 23:50—24:12 that we can find God when things seem hopeless. Lead your group in prayer in the following way:

- **Praise.** God planned from the beginning of the world to make a way for us to live forever. Let’s praise him for thinking of us before we were born. Lead the children as they praise God however they desire.
- **Ask.** God’s power is something we can see at work in our own lives. If you know of a need for God to use his power, you can ask him now. Give children the opportunity to talk to God about a need.
- **Confess.** Any wrongs we’ve done this week will keep us from being close to God. He wants to forgive your sins, if you’ll tell him about them. Allow children to confess their wrongs silently or aloud.
- **Thank.** Let’s thank God for being with us when things seem hopeless. Lead children in expressing thanks.

Remember that no child should be forced to pray, but do encourage and invite each one. When you’ve finished praying, you can quietly talk to the children in your group until the next activity.
We find God when things seem hopeless.

Easter Sunday Map Clue