



seeking:

*Who are you
looking for?*

children's curriculum

JOHN 20:1-18

by Rev. Anna Strickland

MAIN IDEA: *Jesus is always with us.*

engaging the story

storytelling materials

- **garden:** A green piece of felt, fabric, or paper (you might also include some flowers or greenery around it).
- **tomb:** An [aquarium cave](#), [Godly Play® tomb](#), or papier-mâché tomb
- **Jesus, Mary, disciples, and angels:** Clothespin people, [Godly Play® people of God figures](#), or felt figures.



scripture retelling

(Stage directions are in italics. Words to speak aloud are in **bold** text.)

This story takes place at night. *Lay the night sky backdrop.*

In the garden was a tomb where they laid Jesus' body. *Place the tomb in the garden.*

Jesus' follower and friend Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early in the morning to visit his body and take care of it. *Place the Mary figure near the tomb.*

scripture retelling *(continued)*

When she saw that the stone door had been moved away from the entrance to the tomb, Mary ran to get the other followers, worried that someone had taken Jesus' body. Move Mary to the edge of the garden, away from the tomb. Place two more figures for Simon Peter and John next to Mary.

When they got to the tomb, Jesus' followers looked inside. Move the figures to the tomb. Mime Simon Peter and John looking inside the tomb.

They didn't see Jesus in the tomb, only the pieces of cloth his body had been wrapped in. Confused, they went home, leaving Mary alone. Remove the Simon Peter and John figures.

Then Mary looked inside the tomb. There, sitting where Jesus' body had been, were two angels. Place two angel figures in/at the tomb.

They asked her, "Why are you crying?" She told them, "They have taken my friend away and I don't know where they've put him."

Just then, she turned around and saw a man. Place the Jesus figure next to Mary.

She thought the man must be the gardener, so she asked him, "Sir, did you take Jesus away? Please tell me where you put him so I can go get him."

Then the man said her name, "Mary," and she knew then that this man was Jesus!

"Teacher!" she said and she went to hug her friend who had been raised from the dead.

But Jesus said to her, "Don't hold onto me. Even though you see me now, I must go be with God in heaven. Go tell the rest of the followers."

And Mary went to tell everyone how Jesus had been raised to life. Move the Mary figure to the edge of the garden.

This is one of our sacred stories.

wonder wall

Ask the children what questions they have about the story. Add these questions to your "Wonder Wall." To model, you might ask some of the following questions:

- I wonder... What plants were growing in the garden?
- I wonder... How heavy was the stone in front of the tomb?
- I wonder... Did the angels move the stone or did Jesus?

discussion

- Mary saw that the stone wasn't in front of the tomb anymore and knew that meant Jesus wasn't in the tomb anymore. She didn't even need to see the empty tomb to know, just like we don't have to see God to know God is there. How do you know God is with you without seeing God?
- Mary didn't recognize Jesus because she was looking for a body, but Jesus was alive! Can you think of a time when you've been surprised like Mary?
- Jesus tells Mary she can't hold onto him because he has to go to heaven. Are there people (or pets) you love who aren't with you anymore? How do you keep them in your heart?

prayer

Dear God, thank you for always being with us, even when we don't see you. Help us to look for you everywhere. Amen.

extension activities

Depending on time, you might add one or more of the following activities. We also recommend making storytelling materials available to children to retell the story, either as an option for independent play during the Sunday School hour, as a take-home kit, in worship bags, or any combination of these. Instructions and templates to create felt storytelling kits for children are included separately with this resource.

Activity A) Play a Game: Hide and Seek

Materials:

- The Jesus figure (*from the storytelling materials*).
- Easter eggs, or other Easter-themed items (*optional*).

Instructions:

Choose an item to hide, such as the Jesus figure from the story, and invite children to take turns looking for it. Children might also enjoy taking turns hiding the item for others to search for. Older children might like to play hide and seek or sardines in a larger area of the church. Alternatively, you might have an Easter egg hunt during this time.

Activity B) Read a Book: *Where Does God Live?*

Where Does God Live? Written by August Gold, photos by Matthew J. Perlman. SkyLight Paths, 2001.

Mary looked for Jesus in the tomb, but God lives everywhere, wherever we look. Read the book together or make it available for older children to read independently. You might also choose to read this book as a children's moment in worship or send a video read-aloud to parents during the week.

Activity C) Creative Expression: Jesus With Me Flower Jewelry

Materials:

- Yarn or string.
- Scissors.
- Flower-shaped beads, buttons, or foam and/or felt pieces.
- Large beads such as pony beads.
- Keyrings (*optional*).

Instructions:

Invite children to make a flower necklace, bracelet, or keychain to remind them that Jesus is always with them, like he was with Mary in the garden. String beads and flower shapes onto yarn or string and tie the ends together to create a bracelet or necklace. To make a keychain, string beads on a piece of yarn or string and tie the end to a keyring.



about the creator

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Anna Strickland (*she/her*) looks for the Divine in the everyday like treasure in clay jars and first encountered God in the integration of her spiritual self and artistic self. She is a native Austinite and graduated from the University of Texas where she now works as a college minister, especially serving LGBTQ students.

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshiping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God. Learn more about their work at sanctifiedart.org.