

Easter Sunday 2007 *POWER* hour

The Case of the Missing Corpse

Scripture Text: John 20:1-18

Memory Verse: Luke 19:10

***POWER* Line:** Love conquers all.

Note: The Palm Sunday lesson and the Easter lesson were adapted from the kids *POWER* hour series *Search 'n Rescue*. If you would like to continue this series of lessons, order your copy of this creative children's church curriculum from the Pentecostal Publishing House today at www.pentecostalpublishing.com.

Supplies:

- ✓ Red posterboard
- ✓ Musical instruments
- ✓ Two jars of water
- ✓ Two ping-pong balls
- ✓ Paper wads (one per child)
- ✓ Trash can
- ✓ Several rolls of bathroom tissue
- ✓ Sheets
- ✓ White cloth or napkin
- ✓ Cardboard or posterboard stone for tomb
- ✓ Biblical costumes
- ✓ Detective costume/equipment
- ✓ Bottle of oil or perfume
- ✓ *Kids in Praise* CD, player

Preparation:

- ✓ Print the *POWER* line on a red posterboard heart.

- ✓ Fill two jars with water. Mark a ping-pong ball “God’s Love.” With an ice pick, poke several holes in another ping-pong ball.
- ✓ Write the memory verse on two pieces of paper and cut into strips as if the papers had gone through a shredder that still left the words intact (strips wide enough to accommodate one word each).
- ✓ Create a tomb for the Illustrated Sermon. Drape two sheets (preferably dark earthen colors) over a table, leaving an opening in the center. Be sure that the sheets fall over and behind the table to form the back wall of the tomb. Inside the tomb, place a white cloth or a napkin. Unwind half a roll of bathroom tissue and fold it into a stack; place this opposite the napkin. Cut a large stone shape from cardboard. Place it in front of the opening.
- ✓ Choose children to be two soldiers, two angels, Peter, John, and Jesus. Wear a robe or drape a shawl over your shoulders to play the role of Mary. Provide robes and/or shawls and headpieces for the children’s costumes. Use toy swords or make them from cardboard. If possible, have a practice session during the week. If this is not practical, before the story begins take aside the two children chosen to be the angels. Explain that after they move the stone, they are to hide behind the tomb. After Peter and John look into the tomb, they should secretly enter the tomb from the back (of the table).

Schedule

- I. *POWer* of Worship
 - A. Introduction: The Case of the Missing Corpse
 - B. Praise Generator: “God’s Not Dead”
 - C. Truth Conductor: Ping-Pong Object Lesson
 - D. Prayer
 - E. Energy Outlet: Free Throws
- II. *POWer* of the Word

- A. Memory Activity: Shredded Message
- B. Illustrated Sermon
- C. Invitation and Prayer

***POWER* of Worship**

Introduction

As students enter, divide them into groups of three or four. Instruct them to sit together as groups.

Detective from last week welcomes students. **I suppose you all remember last week's case, "The Case of the Missing Donkey."** Turns out the donkey wasn't really missing—he was just kind of borrowed for something very special. **But we really do have a case this week. Here's your first clue.** Holds up a roll of tissue.

As my assistants pass out these rolls of tissue, the youngest person in each group is "It" and stands in the center of his group. When I say go, the other agents in each group wrap "It" with the tissue. Go!

What does the child wrapped in tissue look like? A mummy. **And that is the clue. Our assignment is "The Case of the Missing Corpse." What is a corpse?** The body of a dead person or a mummy. **We have a missing corpse to find today.**

Praise Generator

Pass out musical instruments. March and sing, "God's Not Dead; He's Still Alive." After each chorus, ask the children to trade instruments or give a turn to another child who does not have an instrument. Continue marching until every child has played. Those not playing clap their hands as they sing and march.

Truth Conductor

When someone says mean, teasing words to us, it hurts. It is hard not to let mean words get us down. They make us feel terrible. This is what the devil wants. He does not want us to feel good. Show the ping-pong ball with holes. **This is how the devil wants us to feel.** Drop the ball into the water. It should sink. **The devil wants us to sink in sin. He wants us to give up and quit living for God.**

On the other hand, we can have God's love. Drop the other ball into the water. **Jesus does not want us to give up. He wants us to say, "Devil, get out of my way!"** Push the ball down into the water. It will quickly resurface. **Jesus wants us to pop right back up.** Push ball down again. **When the devil tries to get you to do something you shouldn't do, tell the devil, "Get out of my way! I'm going to live for Jesus!"** Show red posterboard heart. **Whenever I hold up this heart, shout out the *POWER* line. Love conquers all!**

Prayer

Maybe the devil worked on you today to get you to do something you shouldn't. What are some things the devil might try to get children to do? Let children name sins. Point out that the devil often uses others to get us to do wrong.

When the old devil comes and tells you to do wrong, what should you do? Let children respond.
When you are tempted to do wrong, talk to Jesus. He listens, and He will help you fight the devil. With the love of Jesus, you can conquer the devil. Hold up the heart. *Love conquers all.* Lead the children in prayer asking God to fill them with His love.

Energy Outlet

Let's name some ways we can overcome the bad things that the devil throws at us. Give time for responses. Give each child a paper wad. Position the trash can for free throws. Instruct children to toss paper wads into the trash can as they say, "I can overcome the devil by. . . ." Hold up the red heart. *Love conquers all!*

POWER of the Word

Memory Work

Detective enters scratching his head and holding pieces of paper. **I've just received a message of high importance, but someone has put it through the shredder and I need some help to put the message back together. Let's divide up into "lost" and "found" teams and work on this project together.**

If you are wearing brown shoes, call out "lost." Children do so. **The rest call out "found."** Instruct the students to gather in two groups. Adjust teams if needed to create even teams. Give each team a set of shredded words and ask them to put the words in order to reveal the memory verse.

Ahh, yes. Our memory verse. "For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Detective reviews what it means to be spiritually lost. **Because of love, Jesus came to save the lost.** Hold up the heart. *Love conquers all!*

Illustrated Sermon

The Case of the Missing Corpse

Select seven students as indicated in the Preparation section. Dress them in simple biblical costumes (white sheets for angels, robe for Jesus, headpieces or pieces of fabric for disciples, swords for soldiers). Position them as needed for the story. As Mary, the narrator, stand by or behind each character as you tell about him. Give instructions as needed.

Now let's see if we can solve "The Case of the Missing Corpse."

It is time to re-enact the scene of the crime.

Jesus stands at the back of the room. Give the two soldiers swords and place them outside the tomb. Place headpieces on Peter and John and position them on the opposite side of the room. They should have their heads in their hands and pretend to weep. Place robes on the angels.

Whisper for the angels to move the stone to one side of the tomb opening, leaving the sheets together. Help as needed. Tell the soldiers to act frightened and “faint.” The angels hide behind the tomb.

To assume the role of Mary, drape a shawl over your shoulders. Move to the other side of the room and start toward the tomb. Speak sorrowfully. **My name is Mary. I am . . . I was a friend of Jesus. After they crucified Jesus, He was placed in a tomb. It is early morning and I am on my way to anoint His body for burial.** Show bottle.

Point to the tomb. **Oh, look! What has happened? The stone has been rolled away! Oh! Oh! I must tell Peter and John. They will know what to do.**

Run to Peter and John. **Someone has stolen away our Lord’s body. The corpse is missing! At least, I think it is.** Point to the tomb. **Hurry! Go and look in the tomb. See if Jesus is there or if He is missing!**

Boys run to the tomb, pull back the sheets, and look inside. They pull the sheets back enough so everyone can see inside the tomb.

Sure enough, Jesus’ body is missing. Boys bring out the tissue and napkin and give to Mary. They let the sheet drop back in place so the angels can enter the tomb from the back without being seen.

Hold the graves clothes. **It is the grave clothes that were around the body. Oh, where is my Lord’s body? Peter and John are puzzled, too. Where is Jesus’ body? The corpse is missing. They do not know what to do, so they are going home.** Boys return to their seats.

But I cannot leave. I must see for myself. I will look in the tomb. Pull back the sheets so everyone can see. **Oh! What? Two angels? One is sitting where Jesus’ head should be; the other is where His feet should be.** To the angels, **What? You want to know why I am crying? Because they have stolen my Lord’s body, and I do not know where He is.** Jesus approaches from the other side of the room. Turn around and grab your heart. **Oh, it is only the gardener. Sir, if you have taken my Lord’s body away, tell me where you have taken Him.**

Jesus speaks: **Mary.**

Oh, it is Jesus! Fall to your knees in front of Jesus. **You were crucified, but You have risen from the dead, just like You said You would. You’re alive! I must go tell the disciples. I have found the missing corpse! Jesus is risen! Jesus is risen! He is alive!**

Jesus and Mary exit.

Invitation and Prayer

So what happened to the missing corpse? He had risen from the dead and was alive. There is no corpse. Show the heart. ***Love conquers all.*** To conquer something means to overcome or beat it. **When Jesus rose from the tomb, He conquered or overcame death and the grave. His love for us was so great it conquered death.**

Jesus willingly suffered on the cross and died for you and me. His love served others. His love endured pain and lies. His love forgave His enemies. His love conquered all. His love is here now reaching out to you. Call His name and let His love fill you with the Holy Ghost.

Play “No One Loves Me Like Jesus Loves Me” from the *Kids in Praise* CD. Be sensitive to your students and to the Holy Ghost. This is not simply another Easter story, but it is our eternal hope and joy.