

WEEK 4

UPSIDE NMOD

ADULT DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What is the symbolism of the sky going dark in the middle of the day? This happened while Jesus was still alive on the cross. Why? How would the significance have changed if the sky had gotten dark after Jesus died?

2. In addition to the midday darkness, what are some of the events the Centurion witnessed (in this passage and in others) during the Crucifixion that would lead him to believe Jesus was righteous?

3. As a practical matter, why were the women going to Jesus' tomb that Sunday? Why couldn't they go on Saturday? If the tomb was sealed, what might they have been expecting to do when they got there? Why is it significant that it was the women who went to the tomb and receive the good news of the resurrection first?

4. Verse 8 says the women were afraid yet filled with joy. The joy seems obvious, but why might they have been afraid? When is a time you've felt multiple emotions like this at once? Can you relate to the experience of these ancient Hebrew women?

5. Jesus appeared to his 11 living disciples. And we know from other gospel accounts that this wasn't the first time he'd done so. Matthew says that when they saw him their reaction was to worship (v.17) and this seems natural. But Matthew also says some doubted. Why and how might some of the disciples still doubted after all they had seen and heard?

6. How might these conflicting actions (doubt and worship) mirror the women's conflicting emotions (fear and joy)?

7. What does it mean that all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Jesus? Why might Jesus remind the disciples of his authority before saying "therefore" and telling the disciples what they must do?

STUDENTS DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. During the crucifixion/death of Jesus the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. The curtain being torn is God's literal illustration that we have direct access to be in a personal relationship with him. What does this tell you about who God is and why he made the ultimate sacrifice for us? Explain.
2. The true Upside Down moment comes in Jesus' resurrection because the world would never be the same. Considering the resurrection of Jesus, how does his sacrifice turn your world upside down on earth and eternally? How does it effect who you are becoming?
3. When Jesus encountered both Mary and Mary Magdalene after his resurrection, they immediately responded in worship. Understanding that God is present with us every single day, how do you respond when you recognize his presence? Have you ever recognized his presence? If yes, write down the feeling you get (in detail) when you understand that God is working in your life. If no, write down why you might want to experience God and ask him (pray) to show himself to you.
4. JT talked about how your actions can bring meaning to your words. If you have given your life to Jesus, what actions are you taking in your life that do not match up with your commitment to him? What steps do you need to take to change those actions to be more like Christ?
5. Jesus died and rose again so we could live in freedom. That freedom allows a believer to be in the presence of God for all eternity but is also to be used for his glory right now. How have you been using your freedom in Christ for the glory of God? How have you been using your freedom in Christ for your own selfish desires instead of for the glory of God?

Here's Your Challenge:

- Each day this week, use your freedom in Christ for his glory and write down what you did. This could be things like reaching out to someone you haven't talked to in a while and pray for them over the phone. You could send an encouraging note to someone. The options are endless! Ultimately, using the freedom of Christ for his glory is letting the joy you experience from him overflow into your interactions with others. The sky is the limit... ready... go!!!

KIDS DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Simon the Cyrene, a foreigner, carries the cross for Jesus because Jesus needed help and His body was fighting. Sometimes serving Jesus is hard, like carrying a cross. What are some hard things we can do for Jesus?
2. We can talk to God anytime and anywhere! Before Jesus died on the cross, people had to go through a priest to tell God about the things they did wrong and to ask Him for help and guidance. The temple veil was torn in down the middle to show that we now can go to God! What do you talk to God about when you pray to Him?
3. The Roman soldier saw the power of God while he was on guard at Jesus' death. The darkness came, the earth quaked, and the temple veil tore. The soldier then knew that Jesus truly was the Son of God! Have you seen God's power? Does it help you to believe that Jesus is His Son?
4. How do you think you would have reacted if you were present, like the two Marys, when Jesus rose from the dead? Would you question what happened? Or would the amazing signs of Jesus' presence help you know that Jesus was alive?
5. The most important part of our faith is that Jesus rose from the dead? Why? Why does this make us different from other people? We can have eternal life because Jesus took the punishment for our sins and He's ALIVE. What are sins that you struggle with each day? Why do you want eternal life?

Family Activities:

- Preschool and Elementary: Martin Luther said that God didn't just write about the promise of His resurrection in books. He said we can also see resurrection in every leaf in spring-time. Go outside and look for signs of resurrection together! Take a picture of them. Gather wildflowers, See the leaves. Watch the insects. Celebrate LIVING THINGS and LIFE in Christ.
- Preschool and Elementary: Find a rock large enough to paint. Paint a picture of the cross, the grave, or the light of Jesus.. Paint words that tell of Jesus' gift to us. Paint words about how much Jesus loves us! Share these rocks in a neighbor's yard or at a park.