

# Lenten Small Group

## Session Six • Holy Week and Hope • 60-90 Minutes

### 1. Welcome and Fellowship (10 minutes)

- Begin with a warm welcome and casual conversation.
- If applicable, share snacks or refreshments.
- Briefly check in with members about their week and Lenten practices.

### 2. Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

- Lead a prayer inviting God's presence and guidance for the discussion.
- Include a moment of silence to center hearts and minds on Christ.

### 3. Scripture Reading (5 minutes)

- Read John 20:1-18
- Read the passage aloud (Use multiple readers for engagement).

### 4. Group Discussion (30-60 minutes)

- Instructions: Have a group discussions on 3-4 of the following questions. The bolded questions are great starters. If time permits check out the DEEPER DIVE questions at the end of the list.
  - How do you think Mary Magdalene felt when she discovered the empty tomb? How would you have reacted in her place?
  - Why do you think Peter and John ran to the tomb? What does this tell us about their expectations?
  - Have you ever experienced a time when God was working in your life, but you didn't recognize it at first?
  - How does the resurrection of Jesus give us hope in our own lives?
  - What are some ways we can live as people of resurrection hope, even in the face of difficulties?
  - Jesus calls Mary by name, and then she recognizes Him. What does this tell us about the personal nature of our relationship with Jesus?
  - How have you personally encountered Christ in your life?
  - Jesus tells Mary, "Go to my brothers and tell them." Why do you think He chose Mary to be the first witness of His resurrection?



- How can we follow Mary's example and share the hope of Jesus' resurrection with others?
- What is one area of your life where you need to be reminded of the hope of the resurrection?
- How can this passage shape the way you approach Holy Week and Easter this year?
- The resurrection means that death and sin do not have the final word. How does this truth impact the way you live your daily life?
- What practical steps can you take this week to reflect and celebrate the hope of the resurrection?

### Deeper Dive Questions

- How does the story of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection impact your faith?
- What part of Holy Week (Palm Sunday, Last Supper, Good Friday) speaks most to your heart, and why?
- How does Lent prepare you to experience the hope of Easter more fully?

## 5. Reflection and Response (5-10 minutes)

Each person pick one question and share

- What about today's discussion brings you hope?
- Share a "high and/or low" point from the week.
- Where did you see Jesus this week?

## 6. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

- Pray over any specific intentions or challenges shared by group members.
- Offer gratitude for the discussion and guidance as the group continues their Lenten journey.
- Conclude with a communal prayer like the Lord's Prayer.

## 7. Announcements and Sending (5 minutes)

- Share any upcoming events, readings, or service opportunities for Lent.
- Encourage members to check in with each other during the week and utilize their Lenten Journals.

# **The Empty Tomb and The Appearance to Mary of Magdala.\***

John 20:1-18

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.”

So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.

When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.

Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned home.

But Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been. And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken my Lord, and I don’t know where they laid him.”

When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” She thought it was the gardener and said to him, “Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him.”

Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni,” which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, “Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and what he told her.



## **Small Group Guidelines & Expectations**

To ensure a respectful, meaningful, and Christ-centered small group experience, it's helpful to establish clear expectations. Here are some suggested rules:

### **1. Respect Confidentiality**

- What is shared in the group stays in the group.
- Avoid gossip or sharing others' personal stories outside the group.

### **2. Listen Actively**

- Give full attention when someone is speaking.
- Avoid interrupting or side conversations.

### **3. Participate, But Don't Dominate**

- Everyone should have an opportunity to share.
- Be mindful of how much you're speaking and allow space for others.

### **4. Stay on Topic**

- Keep the discussion focused on the scripture, lesson, or theme.
- If a conversation drifts too far, the leader should gently refocus.

### **5. Be Honest and Open**

- Share authentically but within your comfort level.
- Encourage each other without judgment.

### **6. No Fixing, Preaching, or Debating**

- Offer encouragement rather than trying to "fix" someone's struggles.
- Avoid theological debates that could become divisive.

### **7. Be Punctual and Committed**

- Arrive on time and be consistent in attending.
- If you can't make it, let the leader or group know in advance.

### **8. Respect Differences**

- Everyone is on their own spiritual journey.
- Show kindness and understanding even when opinions differ.

### **9. Be Prayerful**

- Pray for each other throughout the week.
- Approach discussions with a spirit of humility and openness to God.