

INTRO

Over these next 40 days we are going to be looking at the amazing story of the 40 days that Jesus spent on earth, from His resurrection on that first Easter Sunday through to His ascension to heaven. To start the series we're going to explore the first resurrection appearance of Jesus. The two key points we'll be looking at are:

1. The **compelling evidence** for the resurrection
2. The **life-transforming effects** of the resurrection

BRING YOUR BIBLES

Read aloud **John 20:1–18**, encouraging everyone to follow along in their own Bibles. The more translations the better as each may highlight something different.

Now allow the whole group the opportunity to share what stood out anew to them and why.

QUESTIONS

1. *[If your church are running the 40 Days with Jesus sermons]* What particularly impacted you from Sunday's message?
2. *[If you are using the small group videos instead]* What particularly impacted you from this week's message?
3. What evidence is there within these passages that Jesus really is alive?
4. What is the significance of Mary Magdalene being the first person to visit the empty tomb and meet the risen Jesus?
5. When Mary runs to report what she has seen to two disciples, they run straight to the tomb. Why the sense of urgency at that time? How does this compare to our sense of urgency in knowing the risen Jesus and telling others about Him today?
6. The passage says that when the 'other disciple' saw the grave clothes, 'He saw and believed'. What confidence can we have in what *we've seen* that Jesus is risen?

7. How does Jesus transform Mary's sense of hopelessness and despair? What does this show us about God's heart for us and the need for us to encounter Him in our own lives?
8. Once Mary realised that she was speaking with Jesus, what did He mean when He told her, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father'?
9. Do we ever 'hold on to' things or people when we should celebrate them but let them go in anticipation for something better yet to come?

SHARE YOUR STORY

You can discuss the following questions together as one group or, if individuals prefer, you could split into groups of twos or threes.

10. When you became a Christian, what first convinced you to believe? Allow everyone the time to briefly share their testimony if they are willing.
11. Why do you think it is important that Christianity is not a speculative leap of faith but is grounded in historical evidence?
12. To be 'really alive' is to be free from the power of darkness, the fear of death and the grip of despair. Which one of these have you found to have the strongest hold on your life in the past? What practical steps did you take to overcome it?

PRAY TOGETHER

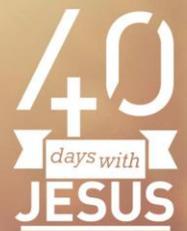
Take the time to invite the Holy Spirit, perhaps begin with prayers of worship and thanksgiving, then you may choose to follow these suggestions for specific prayer:

You could pray:

- for individuals [name them in your hearts if not aloud] in your neighbourhoods or networks who do not know Jesus. Pray that they would have the opportunity to learn about these convincing proofs

WEEK 01 SMALL GROUP

A LIFE-TRANSFORMING ENCOUNTER



- for anyone you know who is trapped by darkness, fear of death, or despair
- for individuals in the group that would like prayer for help in these types of struggles
- that every person in the group would know that they are free to live 'really alive' and to claim that freedom.