**BODY OF PROOF**

**KIDS LEADER PREP GUIDE**

**(For All Grade Levels)**

This guide prepares leaders for each lesson with foundational knowledge and information to help their students discover the truth of Scripture in a deep, meaningful way.

Be sure to also read over the lesson plans in the **Kids Study Leader Guide** in advance so that you’re familiar with the flow of the lesson and have all activity materials ready to go.

**Week 1**

**Replacing My “If Onlys” with “If Jesus”**

**Core Passages:** Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; Matthew 28:5-7

**Text Truth:** I can trust the resurrection, because Jesus said He would die and rise again.

BIBLE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; Matthew 28:5-7

Think about a person in your life (besides Jesus) that you can *always* trust—someone who *never* fails to do what they say they will do. Anyone come to mind? You probably have a hard time thinking of someone who can really keep their word to that degree, who *always* follows through. We often make promises or say we will do something with the very best intentions of following through, but the problem is, we can’t control every part of life—and life can get in the way of even the best intentions.

During His ministry, Jesus spoke of His death and resurrection several times:

***“Then he began to teach them that it was necessary for the Son of Man to suffer***

***many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes,***

***be killed, and rise after three days.”***

***Mark 8:31***

Jesus explained to His followers that He must die and He must rise again. This was the work He had come to do. Old Testament prophets like Isaiah had spoken of the suffering Messiah hundreds of years before the birth of Christ (Isaiah 53:3-12). Imagine the shock this must have caused His followers. This was a Messiah saying that He would die and rise again.

And Jesus spoke about His death and resurrection with all-knowing specificity: “***For he was teaching his disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after he is killed, he will rise three days later” (Mark 9:31).***

The prophet Hosea also spoke to this timeline of three days: ***“He will revive us after two days, and on the third day he will raise us up so we can live in his presence” (Hosea 6:2).*** If the early church had a hashtag or slogan, it would have been #onthethirdday. These words were critical for the earliest witnesses of the resurrection (Acts 10:40; 1 Corinthians 15:4).[[1]](#footnote-1)

Jesus was also *very* specific about the details of the suffering He was about to experience: ***“See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise” (Mark 10:33-34).***

How could Jesus make these predictions and know fully that they would come to pass? In Philippians 2:6 (NIV), Paul tells us that Jesus is “in very nature God.” Jesus could say what would happen with absolute certainty because ***He knows everything***. Jesus was a man on a mission and He was also *God* on a mission. He came for the purpose of redeeming us, and He alone could speak with total confidence about that purpose and everything that would come to pass. And it did come to pass! Everything happened as He said it would: He was rejected by the priests and elders, He was condemned to death, He was handed over to Gentiles, He was mocked and spat on and flogged, He was handed over to be killed. If Jesus was right about all of those things, how could He not have also been right about the final part of His prediction?

Early on the morning of the third day, some women went to Jesus’ tomb. They didn’t find Jesus there. Instead, they found an angel. ***“The angel told the women, ‘Don’t be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7Then go quickly and tell his disciples, “He has risen from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there.” Listen, I have told you.’” (Matthew 28:5-7).***

*“Just as he said.”* We often skip over those four words in the midst of the angel’s proclamation, but what a glorious thing: Jesus rose just like He ***said*** He would! There is no one who has the power to keep His word like Jesus. We can trust the resurrection because Jesus Himself said He would die and rise again.

**Week 2**

**Jesus Rebuilds and Restores the Wrecks of My Life**

**Core Passage:** Luke 7:11-17 Mark 5:35-43 John 11:38-44

**Text Truth:** I can trust the resurrection because Jesus has resurrection power.

BIBLE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Luke 7:11-17 Mark 5:35-43 John 11:38-44

Death is an inescapable reality. The people of Jesus’s time were confronted by this reality constantly. In his book, “Body of Proof,” Dr. Jeremiah Johnston notes, “In the first century world of Jesus, life expectancy was only twenty years, and people’s final days often came with a great deal of suffering. Skeletal remains suggest that as many as one quarter of the Roman Empire, on any given day, was sick, dying, or in need of immediate medical attention; often only one third of the skeletons found in archaeological digs from that time are those of adults (which emphasizes the mortality of children). Infant mortality was as high as 25 percent, and most children wouldn’t live past the age of ten.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Into this culture stepped a Messiah with resurrection power. This week, we will examine three specific instances where Jesus proved that He had power over death. First, let’s look at a story from Luke 7:

***“Then he came up and touched the open coffin, and the pallbearers stopped.***

***And he said, ‘Young man, I tell you, get up!’ The dead man sat up and began***

***to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.”***

***Luke 7:14-15***

When Jesus came into the town of Nain (located about 8 miles southeast of Nazareth), he encountered the funeral procession for a young man. Luke is careful to tell us that the young man’s mother was a widow and that this was her only son. Luke also tells us that Jesus “had compassion on her” (verse 13). The Greek word for compassion is *esplanchnisthē,* and it speaks of a deep, heart-felt emotion. Jesus was deeply moved by the grief of this woman. He is deeply moved by ours as well.

“But Jesus’ compassion is not the end of the story. He not only has the heart to sympathize with this woman’s need; He also has the power to meet it.”[[3]](#footnote-3) Jesus interrupts the funeral when he goes to the coffin and tells the young man to “get up.” The man sits up and begins to speak. Jesus has shown that He has authority over life and death.

Now, let’s consider a story from Mark 5:

***“While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue leader’s house and said, “Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher anymore?” When Jesus overheard***

***what was said, he told the synagogue leader, “Don’t be afraid. Only believe.”***

***Then he took the child by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum” (which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, get up”). Immediately the girl got up and began to walk. (She was twelve years old.) At this they were utterly astounded.***

***Then he gave them strict orders that no one should know about this***

***and told them to give her something to eat.***

***Mark 5:35-36, 41-43, ESV***

Again, the gospel writer is remarkably specific in his telling of this event. It is so important for our kids and preteens to know that these are real events that actually occurred. The details of the retelling indicate that Mark recorded this story consulting eyewitness accounts.

In His travels around the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was approached by a man named Jarius who is described as “a ruler of the synagogue.” This man probably handled both the spiritual and business affairs of the synagogue. He came to Jesus with a dire need: His daughter (12 years old) was dying. He pled with Jesus to intervene. Jesus had already raised the widow’s son at Nain. Jarius had no doubt heard of Jesus’ power to raise the dead.

Jesus went with Jairus but paused to heal a woman who has had a bleeding issue. It is important to note that both Jairus and the woman showed faith in the power of Jesus’s touch. Jairus asked Jesus to lay His hands on his daughter, and the woman trusted that if she could just touch Jesus’s garment, she will be healed. In the midst of this exchange, someone came to give Jairus the news: Your daughter is dead. They even added, “Don’t trouble the teacher further.” Translation: “It’s over Jairus, nothing can be done.” Can you imagine the fear and despair gripping Jairus’s heart at that moment? What loving parent wouldn’t be overwhelmed by grief in that situation?

Jesus’s response to the situation and His charge to Jairus is truly remarkable: “Do not fear, only believe.” What a call to faith! Jesus continued to the house of Jairus. When He arrived, He told the people mourning there that the little girl was merely asleep. The people laughed at Him.

Make no mistake, the parallel accounts of this miracle recorded by Matthew and Luke make it clear that Jesus knows the little girl is dead. She isn’t asleep. ***She is dead.***

Jesus sends everyone away except the girl’s mother and father and Peter, James, and John. Then, He takes the little girl by the hand and uses the gentle words, “Talitha koum”—“Little girl, get up.” This was a very familiar and loving greeting. It might have been the greeting that the little girl’s parents used to wake her in the mornings. In his commentary on this passage, Timothy Keller says, “Jesus is facing the most implacable, inexorable enemy of the human race, and such is His power that He holds this child by the hand and gently lifts her right up through it. ‘Honey, get up.’ Jesus is saying by His actions, ‘If I have you by the hand, death itself is nothing but sleep.’”[[4]](#footnote-4)

The little girl awakens immediately. Jesus told her parents and His followers not to tell anyone but to give the little girl something to eat. Once again, Jesus has proven His authority over death.

Finally, let’s look at a story from John 11:

***“Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone  
was lying against it. “Remove the stone,” Jesus said.  
Martha, the dead man’s sister, told him, “Lord, there is already a stench  
because he has been dead four days.”  
Jesus said to her, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”  
So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you heard me.I know that you always hear me, but because of the crowd standing here I said this, so that they may believe you sent me.” After he said this, he shouted with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out bound hand  
and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth.  
Jesus said to them, “Unwrap him and let him go.”*  
*John 11:38-44***

Of these three resurrection miracles, this one is perhaps the most extraordinary. No other recorded account speaks of a resurrection occurring after *four* days. In those days, bodies were usually prepared for burial by washing and anointing with spices. Then, they were bound in linen cloth, and even the faces were covered. This process would have done little to impede decomposition. After four days, Lazarus’ body was decaying and, as Martha notes, stinking.

Jesus stood before the cave that was Lazarus’ tomb. He ordered the men to take away the stone. He turned and spoke to Martha and said that she would now see the glory of God. Jesus lifted up His eyes toward His Father in Heaven and thanked Him publicly for hearing His prayer. He did so in order that all who were there might see Him acknowledge the source of the power they were about to witness. This miracle would authenticate His claims to be the Messiah and Son of God.

Then, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ***“Lazarus, come out!”*** And the body of Lazarus, bound hand and foot with grave cloths wrapped around it, came out of the tomb. Jesus said to the those gathered around, ***“Unwrap him and let him go.”***

These accounts prove that Jesus has power over death. We can trust the resurrection of Jesus because Jesus has resurrection power.

**Week 3**

**The Greatest Comeback of All Time**

**Core Passages:** 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 John 14:1-6

**Text Truth:** I can trust the resurrection, and I know that one day, Jesus is coming again.

BIBLE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1 Corinthians 15:3-7; John 14:1-6

***“‘Don’t let your heart be troubled. Believein God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. You know the way to where I am going.’***

***‘Lord,’ Thomas said, ‘we don’t know where you’re going. How can we know the way?’***

***Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life.***

***No one comes to the Father except through me.’”***

***John 14:1-6***

It is always helpful to look at Scripture passages in light of other passages. Sometimes, the connection between two sections of Scripture can be truly wondrous. The very first question ever recorded in Scripture is, **“Where are you?”** (Genesis 3:9). This is the question from a heartbroken Father seeking His wayward children. Contrast this with the statement Jesus made in John 14:3, “I will come back and take you to be with me that **you also may be where I am**.” This is the statement of a victorious Savior who made a way for us to come back to our Father. What an incredible promise the Lord gives us! Our risen Savior will return for us.

***“For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.”***

***1 Corinthians 15:3-7***

Paul declared with absolute confidence the gospel message: Jesus died for us and rose again, just like the Scriptures said He would. His resurrection was confirmed by multiple eye-witnesses on several occasions. If Jesus did all of this, how can we doubt He will one day return, as He has promised?

Pastor Jack Graham said that every Christian should live with two days in mind: “This day and that day.” We know that Jesus is returning. We know that He is preparing a place in heaven for us, because He said He was. We know that this broken world will one day be remade. One day, every wrong, every hurt will be made right. As Christians, we get to live today in light of **that glorious day!**

Author and apologist C.S. Lewis said, “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.” We were made to be in a perfect relationship with God, unimpeded by the brokenness of sin. There is nothing that will satisfy us completely beside this. When we put our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus, we also put our faith in the return of Jesus and the day when our faith will become sight.

**Week 4**

**We’re All Traveling the Road to Emmaus**

**Core Passages:** Luke 24:13-28

**Text Truth:** I can trust the resurrection, because other people saw Jesus after He rose from the dead.

BIBLE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Luke 24:13-28

In a courtroom trial, eyewitness testimony is often key in determining what actually happened. In the laws of our justice system in America, eyewitnesses are allowed to present testimony relating only to what they personally saw or heard. This testimony can be entered into evidence by either the prosecution or the defense and can be weighed and considered by a jury.

There is perhaps no evidence for the resurrection more compelling than the eyewitness accounts that are given in Scripture. These are direct accounts from people **who actually saw the risen Christ.** There are a few key things we should consider as we examine these accounts:

1. The writers often disclosed embarrassing details about themselves (e.g. Peter’s denial of Jesus in Mark 14:66-72). People who are lying don’t usually share things that make themselves look worse.
2. The first witnesses to the resurrection were women (Luke 24). The significance of this can be lost on modern-day readers. But at the time, a woman’s testimony was not highly valued. If the gospel writers wanted to make their story appear more credible, they could have chosen to write in witnesses whom society would have deemed more credible.
3. Even the enemies of Christ acknowledged these facts: The tomb was sealed and guarded (Matthew 27:65-66) on Saturday. The tomb was empty on Sunday. (Matthew 28:11-15)

This week, we will focus on the moment in Luke 24 when Jesus appeared to two of His followers as they walked from Jerusalem to the nearby village of Emmaus (about 7 miles away). It is worth noting that this is just *one* of several recorded appearances. We encourage you to read the following accounts on your own:  
  
Jesus appeared to:

* Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18)
* Other women (Matthew 28:9-10)
* Peter (Luke 24:34)
* The disciples, without Thomas (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25)
* The disciples, including Thomas (John 20:26-29)
* Seven disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-25)
* The disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18)
* Over 500 believers (1 Corinthians 15:6)
* His half-brother, James (1 Corinthians 15:7)
* The disciples—and shared a meal (Acts 1:3-8; Luke 245:44-49)
* Paul (1 Corinthians 15:8; Acts 9:1-6; 18:9-10; 23:11)

In Luke 24, we see that on Sunday evening, two followers of Jesus were walking the road to Emmaus. Cleopas, the husband of Mary's sister, and his friend were reeling from the news they had just heard. They would be glad to reach Emmaus and away from Jerusalem, with its screaming mobs and cruel Roman soldiers. There had been a terrible crucifixion the day after Passover. They should have left sooner, but they wanted more news about the rumors they had been hearing.

Suddenly, the two men realized that someone else had come up and was walking beside them. Where had He come from? "What is this dispute that you’re having with each other as you are walking?" the stranger asked. Cleopas was shocked that He would ask such a question. He responded, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that happened there in these days?" "What things?" the stranger asked.

The two men began to tell the stranger about Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet, powerful in action and speech. The Jewish religious leaders handed Him over for the Romans to kill, but it was the Jews who were responsible for His death. They crucified Him, even though they had hoped He was the promised Redeemer of Israel—the Messiah. Now it was the third day since the crucifixion, and there was word this morning that His body was gone. Some of the women said an angel told them He was alive.

Some of Jesus's disciples went to the tomb and found that His body was really gone. Some say that He has been resurrected, but no one has seen Him alive yet. The stranger told them how the prophets had spoken. "Wasn’t it necessary,” He asked, "for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into His glory?” Then, the stranger began to explain in detail what Moses and the prophets had said about the Christ. This stranger was Jesus, teaching them what the Old Testament writings and prophets had said about Himself, but they still did not recognize Him.

Beginning with Moses, Jesus explained how the Old Testament pointed to His coming and His sacrificial death. Jesus had to be crucified. It had been a part of God's plan from the very beginning:

**Sign #1** Adam and Eve: The willful act of disobedience by Adam and Eve would require a Redeemer. God promised this in Genesis 3:15 in the seed of the woman. This verse is considered to be the first preaching of the Gospel. In it, all history and prophecy are combined. The continual hostility between the forces of good and evil, between man and Satan, and between people of faith and the unregenerate are contained in the words of this single verse.

**Sign #2** -Abraham and Isaac: Abraham trusted God to provide a solution for the death of Isaac, as hard as it must have been to place his own son on the sacrificial altar. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. Isaac was spared. Abraham's sin debt was redeemed by his faith in God's provision, just as Jesus had done for the two men to whom He was talking.

**Sign #3** - Moses: When "God's chosen people" became slaves in Egypt, He sent the deliverer Moses. After 10 plagues, Pharaoh was persuaded to set the people free. However, it had taken

the death of Egypt's firstborn before the Pharaoh acted. God required that a perfect lamb be killed and the blood spread on the doorpost of each house. The angel "passed over" the house with blood on the door. Jesus became the Lamb of God when He died to take away the sin of mankind. This stranger walking to Emmaus was the Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Sign #4**- The Law:The Law was given to Moses as a revelation of God's own character. Keeping the Law, as many believed, would make one righteous and acceptable to God. Keeping the Law perfectly was impossible for imperfect humans with a sin debt over their heads. It was faith God was seeking. It was a pure heart that trusted in Him. The Law and the system of Old Testament sacrifices it required pointed to the perfect man who would come in time to give Himself as a ransom for many.

**Sign #5** - David, the King: God had chosen a special king for Israel, His people. He was not a perfect king, but he was determined to honor God. The chosen people of God prospered under

his rule. God promised one day a son would be born from the line o/David's descendants in Bethlehem who would be the Messiah. This Son would rule the world from the throne of David. This stranger walking to Emmaus was that Son o/David.

**Sign #6** - The Prophets: The chosen people of God prospered in their new land, but they forgot what God had done for them. They failed to obey His commandments. They worshiped idols.

Even David and the kings who followed him did not set good examples of godliness. God sent a group of men known as "prophets" to warn the people about the consequences of their sin. The people sometimes repented of their sin, but often they refused to heed the warnings. The prophets also spoke of a great deliverer who would come to Israel to establish God's kingdom on earth. Eventually, because of their apostasy, God's chosen people were captured and carried away by foreign nations as slaves. They longed for a deliverer and the chance to return to their homeland. Now here was that deliverer, a prophet Himself, walking beside them down the road to Emmaus.

**Sign #7** -Jesus, the Carpenter from Nazareth: The stranger reminded the two men about what they already knew about Jesus-His miracles of healing; how He calmed the forces of nature, walked on water, multiplied food, and chose a group of men to be His disciples. This same Jesus was the stranger walking beside them.

When the three travelers arrived at Emmaus and sat down to eat together, an odd thing happened. The stranger seemed to take charge of the meal. He was the guest, not the host, but he took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave a piece to each of the men. As He did, their eyes were opened, and suddenly they knew who He was. What did they see that made them realize it was Jesus? Could it have been the way He broke the bread, or maybe they saw the nail prints in His hands as He handed them the bread? Now they understood. He really was alive! Then, as quickly as He had appeared, He “disappeared from their sight.”

1. Johnston, Jeremiah. *Body of Proof*. Brentwood, Tennessee, Lifeway Press, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Johnston, Jeremiah. *Body of Proof*. Brentwood, Tennessee, Lifeway Press, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Begg, Alistair. “Jesus Christ: Compassionate Shepherd.” Truth for Life, January 27, 2022, <https://blog.truthforlife.org/jesus-christ-compassionate-shepherd>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Keller, Timothy, [*King’s Cross: The Story of the World in the Life of Jesus*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0525952101/bettwowor-20). Burbank, California , Dutton Books, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)