



# WEEKLY STUDENT GUIDE

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8*

## CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

In uncertain times, we have to find something that is certain to hold onto. An anchor to hold us steady in the storm. That anchor is Jesus. While our circumstances change, Jesus never does.

To help anchor yourself into Jesus so He can be an anchor for you, we've created a special resource you can use during Easter week that will cover some of the attributes and characteristics of Jesus. You can find this in the same student section of the family resources page that this guide is in.

**Questions to think about or discuss:** How does it help to know that Jesus is the same now as He was 2000 years ago or before the Coronavirus? What are some of your favorite things about Jesus that you can hold onto right now?

## GOD IS WITH YOU

The God who never changes is the same God who is with you. The question is are you with Him? Are you using this season when you have a lot of extra time to press into God and grow in your relationship with Him? Here are a few things that can help you do that:

1. **Read the Bible daily** using the L3 Story Plan that's found on the Pinelake App. We've created a guide on our resources page to help you read & apply the Bible.
2. **Pray daily.** We've provided a prayer challenge (3 to 30) on the resources page that will help you get going.
3. **Gather online with your small group weekly.** Contact your small group leader or student pastor to know how!

**Questions to think about or discuss:** What do you do if you don't 'feel' like God is with you? How can you do better this week in spending time with God?

## EASTER IS COMING!

Easter is the greatest event in human history! It's so great that you shouldn't keep it to yourself. Use the week leading up to Easter to:

1. Share a 60-second video on social media about how Jesus has changed your life. Make sure and use the hashtag, #JesusChangedMyLife. If you need some help on how to share your story, look at the next page.
2. Text your friends the link to our student videos.
3. Do something creative to invite neighbors to our online Easter services, like using chalk art on your driveway or sidewalk to write an encouraging verse and then the church's website (pinelake.org).

# God's Story and Yours

God's story goes like this...

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He made people in his image to reign over his world by his word.

The first man and woman rebelled against God, and all humanity followed. Claiming to be wise, we became fools and traded the truth of God for the lie that we could live and reign without him.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loves us, sent his Son to pay for our sins. He has made us alive together with Christ and is reconciling to himself all things in heaven and earth by making peace through the blood of his cross.

We now wait for the day when all things will be made new and we will worship Jesus in a garden city, seeing him face-to-face and singing with all the saints, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain."

This is God's big story, and he's weaving each of our stories together with his for the glory of Jesus. Telling your story is a powerful way to share the good news of Jesus with others. And what better time to do that than Easter?

## The Hero of the Story

You can tell a lot about people by how they tell their stories. Who is the hero? What obstacle do they overcome? What power does the hero use to win? Many of us tell stories with ourselves as the hero, or share testimonies of how this book or that teacher changed our lives...and can change yours too! But as followers of Jesus, our stories put Jesus front and center. We say yes and amen to *Ephesians 2*—we were enemies of God, but God loved us and saved us by his grace in Jesus Christ. So we learn to re-tell our stories—bragging about the hero who died to save the villains so that we could become his friends.

# Preparing Your Easter Story

## **BEFORE JESUS**

Our stories begin with where we came from and where God was in our upbringing.

"Growing up..."

- What did you think about Jesus?

Eventually, we began living our own version of life without God. This may be a series of habits or decisions that are demonstrably sinful. Some of our stories will highlight a tragic event or personal crisis that made us aware of our need for a savior. Or maybe you realized that even though you grew up in church, you didn't really know Jesus.

"My life was..."

- What event, decisions, or habits marked or exemplified life before Jesus?

## **HOW YOU BEGAN A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS**

Our stories take a turn when Jesus enters in. "Then I heard the good news..."

- What was it about Jesus that drew you to trust in him?

Make it clear that Jesus is the hero. You could say something like, "I believed that Christ died from my sins and rose from the grave" or "all of a sudden, I couldn't deny God's grace in sending his son for me." Another option is to quote a bible passage that makes the good news very clear, such as *John 3:16*, *Romans 5:8*, or *1 John 4:10*.

## **HOW JESUS HAS CHANGED YOUR LIFE**

The bible ends with Jesus on the throne, reigning over a new creation. However, our stories are not finished yet. We live in a real world, but with real hope.

- How has new life in Jesus changed the way you think about yourself?
- How has Jesus changed your habits, actions, or emotions?

## **KEEPING IT SIMPLE**

If you feel stuck, try using the two big categories from the parable of the prodigal son. Were you more reckless or a religious rule-follower? Whatever you *were*, you are not that any more. Talk about the way Jesus saved you from that and how he's showing you a new way of life. You could also try contrasting your core identity (how you view yourself) before and after Christ.

# A Sample Story

## **Growing Up...**

"Growing up, I saw Jesus as being there if you needed comfort and courage." "Life wasn't about God, life was about girls." I knew about God but I didn't know God personally."

## **My life was...**

"I was driven by my need be seen as somebody special. This led to focus on sports, how my friends were, relationships, etc." "I did anything I could to be accepted." "I struggled with drinking and anger." "I didn't do big things wrong, but I judged everyone else."

## **Then I heard...**

"Then I heard about the real Jesus." "It happened when I was..." "The Jesus who died but rose from the grave and offers new life to all who follow him."

## **Now...**

I'm not saying following Jesus has made life "all good all the time." But every day he shows me I am not defined by my failures or successes, but by his love for me.