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## Easter Workshop

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### WELCOME:

(5 min)

Welcome all participants, and introduce yourself.

Explain the format of the day and any house-keeping/safety announcements. Begin by outlining the Learning Intentions. You may like to display these so that you can refer to them throughout the session.

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## LEARNING INTENTIONS:

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We will discover that because Jesus rose everything changed  
we are shown a new radical way of living  
We will remember that life triumphs over all and that as Catholics we are called to live  
lives of hope and joy sharing God's vision of the world.  
Jesus is the light of the World

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### INTRODUCTION:

(20 minutes)

(Material Needed: A trick candle that relights when you blow it out)

Matthew 28: 5-7

The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, the one who was killed on the cross. But he is not here. He has risen from death as he said he would. Come and see the place where his body was. And go quickly and tell his followers. Say to them: 'Jesus has risen from death. He is going into Galilee. He will be there before you. You will see him there.'" Then the angel said, "Now I have told you."

To set up: Sit everyone around in a circle and have the words "You are the light of the world" displayed for everyone to see either on a poster or a screen

- Turn the lights out, or close the curtains and light the trick candle

**SAY: In the New Testament of the bible there are many stories about Jesus who is the light of the world. When Jesus came into the world, he was a bright light. People were drawn to Jesus, they were attracted to his goodness and light. Jesus led them and showed them how to live good lives. But then Jesus died.**

- Blow out the candle, and wait. Wait until it relights itself.  
**SAY: But 3 days later Jesus came back to life. We worship Jesus, who is God because God is love and lives today. By coming back to life, God shows us that love will always rule – even over death.**

- Pray the following reflection and pause after each line so that the group can say  
**YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

**Leader: Jesus, we believe you rose from the dead**  
**All: YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

**Leader: Jesus, we believe you are always with us.**  
**All: YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

**Leader: Jesus, we believe you are present in those around us.**  
**All: YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

**Leader: Jesus, we believe you are present in scripture.**  
**All: YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

**Leader: Jesus sometimes we forget that you are truly alive and with us. We forget that you are our friend and that you died and rose for us. We forget that you love us and want to help us journey through life. Jesus as we gather today we ask you to increase our faith, and open our eyes so that we may see you in our everyday. AMEN**

## **ICE BREAKER GAMES:**

**(15 minutes)**

### **The impossible human knot...or not**

(Material Needed: no materials required)

- This warm up games illustrates how Jesus surprised his disciples and friends by rising from the dead. This idea of rising from the dead seems impossible a little bit like undoing a human knot without breaking it.

To set up: Get everyone to stand in a circle and hold hands. Now drop hands and reach their right hand into the centre, grabbing the hand of someone else. It is important that they do not grab the hand of someone next to them.

Next, do the same thing with your left hands.

- Challenge the group to undo the impossible knot without letting go of any hands.
- The aim is to go over or under hands until you are back into a circle
- You can challenge them by timing them to do it twice and see if they can beat their original time.

Sometimes things that seem impossible aren't!

## Wink murder – surprise!

(Material Needed: no materials required)

- This is a version of wink murder. Before you start, ask the children how they think Jesus' followers would have acted when they saw that the tomb was empty and that he was actually alive? (scared, surprised, unbelieving, full of questions ...)
- This game is all about showing how surprised you would be if you met Jesus after he rose.
- Does anyone want to show me a great surprise reaction? Ask a few children to demonstrate- the more dramatic the better!!

To set up: Get everyone to sit in a circle on the floor.

- Ask them to close their eyes.
- Leader moves around the circle and taps one person on the shoulder, this person becomes 'Jesus'.
- Tap another person to play Mary, who recognises Jesus after his resurrection.
- The children now open their eyes, and begin to make eye contact with each other.
- The person playing 'Jesus' will try and wink at one person at a time without the others noticing. Try and be secretive and catch them by surprise!
- The person playing Mary has 3 guesses to try and recognise Jesus.
- The person who is winked at has to look up and make an exaggerated surprise reaction and then say "Now I see". (*He/she doesn't look at the person who did the winking. That's half the fun not 'giving it away'.*)
- After the reaction the person who has been winked out is out, and lies down.

### DISCUSSION:

(5-10 min)

To encourage a focus on the topic of Easter. Ask the families to sit in smaller groups and share some things that they know about Easter or that they do at Easter. Here are some focus questions.

- What are some ways your family celebrates Easter?
- Do you have any special foods or traditions?
- Do you know if the church has different decorations at Easter time? Can you remember what they are? (flowers, colourful decorations, lots of white and gold, paschal candle...)
- What do we do with eggs at Easter? (hide them, share them, decorate them)
- What have eggs got to do with Jesus and our Easter story?

*(allow time for discussion between families/groups before sharing some responses)*

To end this section, remind everyone that Easter is a celebration of new life and light. It is a time to celebrate the new way of life that Jesus offers us. Easter reminds us that Jesus is the light to guide us in this different way of living.

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**GROUP WORK:**

**(80 min)**

The group work will be working on a small Easter play and an art activity (Choice of 2)

**SURPRISE! JESUS IS ALIVE**

**(60 min)**

(Material needed: Copies of play words, a table with a long table cloth, and some plates and bread.)

Split the large groups into smaller groups so that they can work on the play. Give each group 20-30 minutes to practice and prepare. Make sure you have enough time to share the plays, you might like to have certificates for the best actor, or the most enthusiastic actor etc.

Based on Luke 24:13-35

**CHARACTERS:**

Reader          Cleopas          Jesus          Disciple          Apostles

**READER:**

The day that Jesus rose from the dead, two of his friends were on the way to a village called Emmaus. They were talking as they walked along, when they noticed someone else walking with them. They didn't recognise him.

- *Cleopas and disciple walk along the road, looking sad, pretending to talk and Jesus joins them*

**JESUS:**

What are you guys talking about, and why are you looking so sad?

**READER:**

They stopped, and turned to Jesus. Cleopas said:

**CLEOPAS:**

Are you kidding? You must be the only person in Jerusalem who doesn't know what's been going on!

**JESUS:**

What things? What are you talking about?

**DISCIPLE:**

You must have heard about the things that happened to Jesus, how we thought he had come to save us but then he was killed. Not much of a king eh?

**CLEOPAS:**

Yeah, we were hoping that he would free us and we are gutted because he's dead! Then today 2 ladies came and told us that his body had gone, it wasn't in the tomb. They said that they saw angels who said he was alive! Now we don't know what to believe!

**DISCIPLE:**

Some of our friends went to check it out and they didn't find him either.

**READER:**

Then he said to them:

**JESUS:**

Seriously guys?! Don't you get it? Didn't Jesus tell you that he had to suffer and die to enter his glory and continue the plan of God?

- *Continue walking as a group*

**READER:**

Then the person, continued to tell them both about the mission of Christ and the kingdom of God, and how life could now be so different. He didn't tell them then who he was, and as they arrived at the village, he acted as if he was going to keep going. But the two disciples wanted to hear more, so they begged him to stay with them.

**DISCIPLE:**

Hey, it's getting dark, and we'd love to keep talking why don't you stay with us?

**READER:**

So, he went inside to stay with them.

- *Go inside a house and sit around the table, with a table cloth that reaches the ground.*

**READER:**

They sat around the table to share a meal, and he took the bread and thanked God, then he broke it and handed it to them. Suddenly they realized who was sitting with them. But just as they did... he wasn't there anymore and they said to each other:

- *Jesus takes bread breaks it and shares it. The disciples show surprise when they finally recognise him. At this moment turn off the lights and Jesus quickly goes and sits with the rest of the group watching. Then turn the lights on and continue. (Or, the readers can say 'freeze' and the actors freeze and Jesus quickly moves away, then the readers says 'unfreeze'.)*

**DISCIPLES:**

That's crazy, where's he gone? That was Jesus!! We should have known! Didn't you feel your heart burning as he walked with us and told us all about God's mission? We've got to tell the others!

**READER:**

The two people, quickly left and returned to Jerusalem. They were buzzing with excitement and couldn't wait to tell their friends. They met their friends and told them how they recognised Jesus when he broke the bread. Surprisingly their friends had great news too.

**APOSTLES:** Yes, it must be true!! We wouldn't have believed you, but Simon Peter saw him too!!

***EVERYONE: Jesus is alive! Alleluia! Alleluia!***

Reflection:

In this play the two friends didn't recognise Jesus. But can you remember what happened to them as they were walking with him (Their hearts were burning)

What do you think this means? Have you ever felt you loved someone so much your heart would burst? Do you think it might have been something like this?

We meet Jesus every day, but we are like the disciples and we probably don't recognise Jesus either.

What do you think this means?

Where do we meet Jesus?

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### **OPTION 1: PASCAL CANDLE!**

**(20 min)**

(Material needed: Paschal Candle, paschal candle cut outs, bright holographic paper for flames, colouring pens/pencils, scissors, glue or cellotape to attach the flame)

After the performances summarise by referring back to the candle activity at the start of the day. Because Jesus defeated death, everything changed. We now have hope that life can be different. Jesus is the light that guides us through this life, a bit like a light house that guides ships to shore.

The symbols of light and new life are really important for Catholics. At Easter, perhaps the most powerful symbol is that of fire and light. Jesus came into this world to set our hearts on fire, at Easter as we light the Paschal Candle from the Easter fire and the light travels through the church, we are reminded that we too are called to be light for those around us. We are called to live a life of love, forgiveness, joy and peace showing others that money, strength and power are not how we will find fulfilment as people.

Distribute a Paschal Candle cut out to each child and then using the church Paschal Candle briefly explain the different symbols.

A **cross** representing Jesus' death and resurrection

The first and last letter of the Greek alphabet (**alpha and omega**). This symbolises that Jesus is the beginning and the end.

It also has the **year** reminding us that Christ is Lord of our time, and is here with us always.

Finally it has **5 grains of incense** on the cross that symbolise the wounds of Jesus (head, feet, hands and side).

A **flame**, Jesus is the light of the world.

This candle is lit at every liturgy during Easter and at also at Baptisms and Funerals connecting our lives with the life and death of Jesus.

Allow children time to look at the Paschal Candle and then decorate their own candles and attach a flame. You can use some of the ideas on the resource page or let the children draw their own.

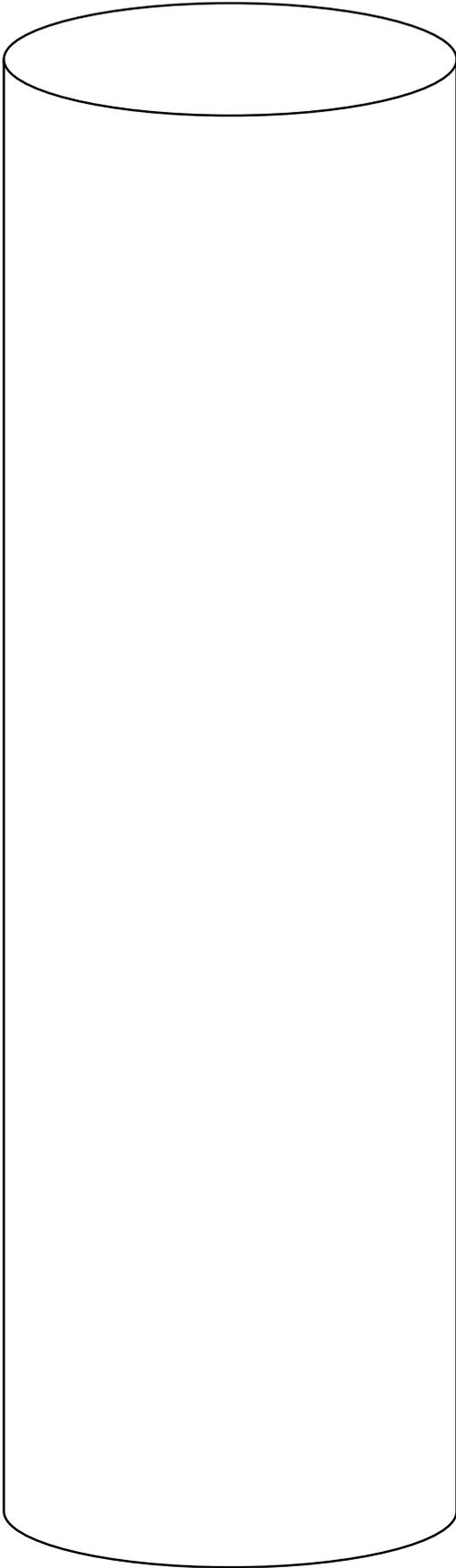
**OPTION 2: LET IT SHINE CRAFT**

**(20 min)**

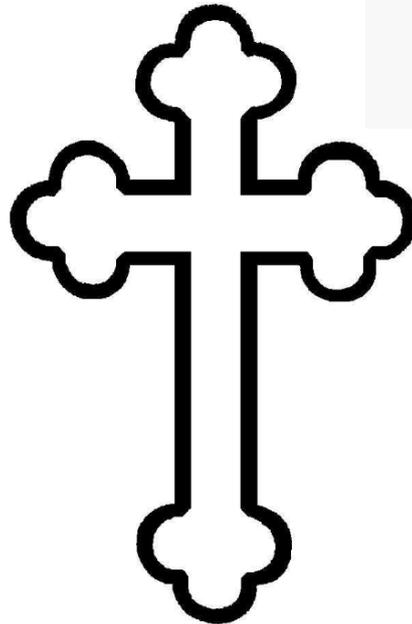
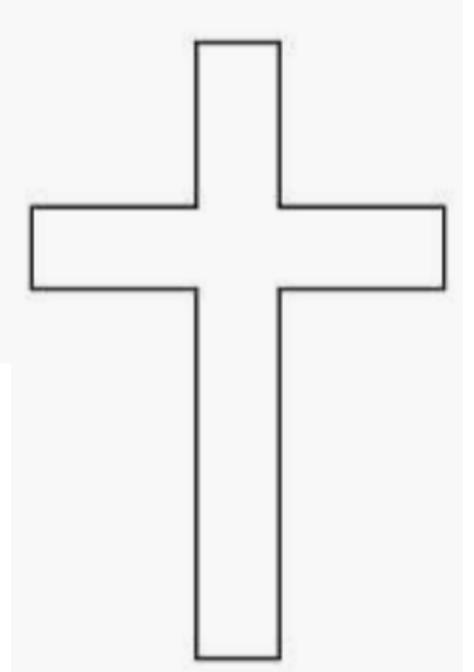
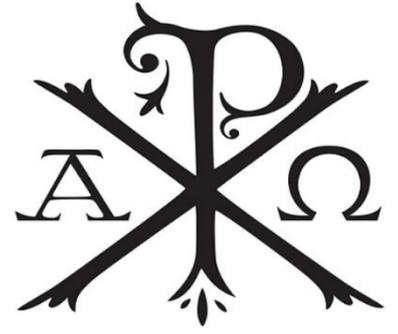
(Material needed: paper plates, yellow cupcake liners, card, crayons or felts, scissors, glue sticks, markers)

Give each child the material they need to make the holder.

- Cut the paper plate in half and trim a small section off along the bottom to create a base. Use the excess to make a little handle.
- Glue together and colour.
- Cut out the candle and flame from construction paper.
- Glue to the base and then attach a cup cake holder which has been flattened out behind the flame.
- Write 'Let it shine' or 'Jesus is the Light' or 'Shine, shine, shine!'

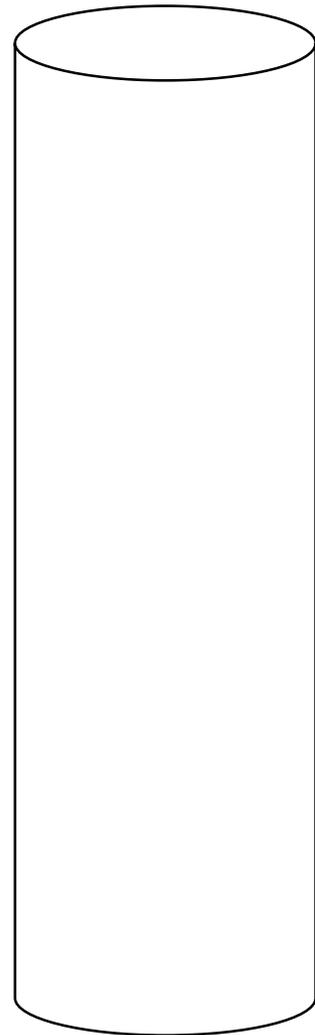
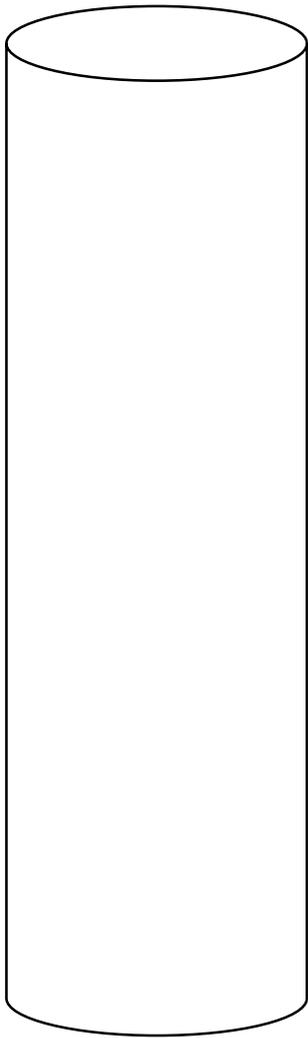


Paschal Candle Template



Candle Holder Template

2 per page



## SHARE THE GOSPEL:

(5 min)

(Material needed: Bible)

Easter reminds us that through Christ's death and resurrections we can live a life that is radically different from the way other people choose to live. It is a life of love and service.

### ROMANS 6:8-14

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#### Dead to sin but alive to Christ

If we died with Christ, we know that we will also live with him. Christ was raised from death. And we know that he cannot die again. Death has no power over him now. Yes, when Christ died, he died to defeat the power of sin one time—enough for all time. He now has a new life, and his new life is with God. In the same way, you should see yourselves as being dead to the power of sin and alive with God through Christ Jesus.

So, do not let sin control you in your life here on earth. You must not be ruled by the things your sinful self makes you want to do. Do not offer yourself to serve sin, but offer yourselves to God. Be like people who have died and now live. Offer yourself to God to be used for doing good. Sin will not be your master, because you are not under law but under God's grace.

This is the Word of the Lord.

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## SONG:

(15 min)

(Materials needed: computer with song and sound system)

#### THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

Below are three different options for the song, depending on your ability, confidence and energy levels.

One version of the lyrics can be found in the resources at the end of the workshop.

- *You may want to learn this song as a group*
- *Then break up into smaller groups to add actions to the verses.*
- *Return to the main group and sing through together with each group showing the actions they have created*

This little light of mine.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=recdOYUmSRQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ty9bZNXN4uWA>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_C4XwH7UitU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_C4XwH7UitU)

## PRAYER SESSION: LIGHT

(10-15min)

(Materials needed: computer with song and sound system, prayer table, prayer cloth, candle and matches, taper candles, scripture on card for someone to read, the prayer on card for everyone.)

Prepare a prayer focus/table that is simple with a single large candle (paschal candle if you have one). Hand out taper candles to everyone else.

Leader: Easter begins with light, with a fire lit in the darkness. We gather around the fire that represents Christ, the light of the world. The fire destroys the darkness, just like Jesus destroys the power of sin. From the fire, we light the Easter Candle, a sign of Jesus here with us. From this candle the Light of Christ is gifted to the whole community.

- We begin with a verse from scripture.

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Reader: Ephesians 5:8-14

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ...Everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says;

‘Sleeper, awake!  
Rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.’

*This is the word of the Lord*

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- Pray:

Reader: Christ yesterday, today and tomorrow.  
All: Jesus the beginning and the end  
Reader: Christ the Alpha and the Omega  
All: Jesus the beginning and the end  
Reader: Christ our saviour and the light of our world  
All: Jesus the beginning and the end

**The leader lights a small candle from the centre candle  
sits down and the people on either side pass the light from their candle to the next.**

**As you light your individual candle say:  
Christ our light.**

**Leader:** May the light of Christ, who is alive today chase away the darkness of our hearts and minds and fill it with love and life.

**Finish by singing This Little Light of Mine.**

End with: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## Conclusion:

(10 min)

(Materials needed: some electrical tape or chalk to draw line)

To complete the work-shop finish off with a game

### In or out of the tomb?

- Draw a line down the centre of the room with chalk or put a piece of tape the length of the room.
- The children all stand on the line facing the front.
- The right side of the room is “in the tomb” the left side of the room is “out of the tomb”
- The leader shouts ‘in the tomb’ and the children have to jump to the right side, the last one there and anyone who jumps to the wrong side is out.
- Return to the line and repeat.
- The last player standing is the winner.
- To make things a bit more challenging you can point to the wrong side when you shout your instructions or if you have energy you can jump to the wrong side when you give your instruction. You can speed it up to increase the challenge level.

### Surprise Hide and Seek?

- Remind children that everyone was surprised when Jesus rose and it’s important to remember that the way he asks us to live our lives can be quite surprising too.
- Have all the children run and find a good place to hide.
- When the "seeker" gets near a hiding place, the child will JUMP out and say SURPRISE!!!
- Continue and let children hunt for others and the hiding children will shout SURPRISE when someone gets close to their hiding spot.

**RESOURCES:**

**THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE:**

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Jesus lives in me, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Jesus lives in me, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Jesus lives in me, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Jesus lives in you, I'm gonna help it shine.  
Jesus lives in you, I'm gonna help it shine.  
Jesus lives in you, I'm gonna help it shine.  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

## This Little Light of Mine (Guitar Chords)

**G**

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.

**C**

**G**

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.

**G**

**B**

**Em**

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,

**G**

**D**

**G**

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

**G**

Jesus lives in me, I'm gonna let it shine.

**C**

**G**

Jesus lives in me, I'm gonna let it shine.

**G**

**B**

**Em**

Jesus lives in me, I'm gonna let it shine,

**G**

**D**

**G**

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

**G**

Jesus lives in you, I'm gonna help it shine.

**C**

**G**

Jesus lives in you, I'm gonna help it shine.

**G**

**B**

**Em**

Jesus lives in you, I'm gonna help it shine,

**G**

**D**

**G**

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

**SURPRISE! JESUS IS ALIVE**  
**Script - Based on Luke 24:13-35**

CHARACTERS:

Reader            Cleopas            Jesus            Disciple            Apostles

**READER:**

The day that Jesus rose from the dead, two of his friends were on the way to a village called Emmaus. They were talking as they walked along, when they noticed someone else walking with them. They didn't recognise him.

- *Cleopas and disciple walk along the road, looking sad, pretending to talk and Jesus joins them*

**JESUS:**

What are you guys talking about, and why are you looking so sad?

**READER:**

They stopped, and turned to Jesus. Cleopas said:

**CLEOPAS:**

Are you kidding? You must be the only person in Jerusalem who doesn't know what's been going on!

**JESUS:**

What things? What are you talking about?

**DISCIPLE:**

You must have heard about the things that happened to Jesus, how we thought he had come to save us but then he was killed. Not much of a king eh?

**CLEOPAS:**

Yeah, we were hoping that he would free us and we are gutted because he's dead! Then today 2 ladies came and told us that his body had gone, it wasn't in the tomb. They said that they saw angels who said he was alive! Now we don't know what to believe!

**DISCIPLE:**

Some of our friends went to check it out and they didn't find him either.

**READER:**

Then he said to them:

**JESUS:**

Seriously guys?! Don't you get it? Didn't Jesus tell you that he had to suffer and die to enter his glory and continue the plan of God?

- *Continue walking as a group*

**READER:**

Then the person, continued to tell them both about the mission of Christ and the kingdom of God, and how life could now be so different. He didn't tell them then who he was, and as they arrived at the village, he acted as if he was going to keep going. But the two disciples wanted to hear more, so they begged him to stay with them.

**DISCIPLE:**

Hey, it's getting dark, and we'd love to keep talking why don't you stay with us?

**READER:**

So, he went inside to stay with them.

- *Go inside a house and sit around the table, with a table cloth that reaches the ground.*

**READER:**

They sat around the table to share a meal, and he took the bread and thanked God, then he broke it and handed it to them. Suddenly they realized who was sitting with them. But just as they did... he wasn't there anymore and they said to each other:

- *Jesus takes bread breaks it and shares it. The disciples show surprise when they finally recognise him. At this moment turn off the lights and Jesus quickly goes and sits with the rest of the group watching. Then turn the lights on and continue. (Or, the readers can say 'freeze' and the actors freeze and Jesus quickly moves away, then the readers says 'unfreeze'.)*

**DISCIPLES:**

That's crazy, where's he gone? That was Jesus!! We should have known! Didn't you feel your heart burning as he walked with us and told us all about God's mission? We've got to tell the others!

**READER:**

The two people, quickly left and returned to Jerusalem. They were buzzing with excitement and couldn't wait to tell their friends. They met their friends and told them how they recognised Jesus when he broke the bread. Surprisingly their friends had great news too.

**APOSTLES:** Yes, it must be true!! We wouldn't have believed you, but Simon Peter saw him too!!

**EVERYONE:** *Jesus is alive! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

