

# Above All

**Bible Story:** Above All (Crucified and Risen) • *John 18:12–20:23 (Supporting: John 16, Matthew 26)*

**Bottom Line:** Jesus put us first.

**Memory Verse:** *Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* Philippians 2:3 (NIRV)

**Life App:** Humility—Putting others first by giving up what you think you deserve

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

## 1. *Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding*

**What You Need:** Inflated balloons, permanent markers

### What You Do:

- Give each of the kids an inflated balloon and let them write their name on it.
- Tell the group to try and keep their balloons “resurrected” (in the air) for 30 seconds.
- If a balloon touches the floor before the time is up, tell kids to leave it there and help someone else keep their balloon in the air.
- When time is up, ask each of the kids whose balloons are on the floor to share one thing they’re looking forward to as they celebrate Easter.
- Repeat the game using variations in the amount of time the balloons must stay “resurrected.”
- Provide additional balloons if one pops.
- Here are some additional questions you might ask after each round.
  - Where do you usually spend Easter?
  - If you could have the perfect Easter basket, what would be in it?
  - Why do you like Easter?
  - Do you have any Easter traditions with friends or family?

## 2. Pillowcase Stuff

*Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body*

**What You Need:** Pillows, pillowcases, stopwatch or timer (*optional*)

### What You Do:

- Form two teams with kids standing shoulder-to-shoulder.
- Give the player at the end of each line a pillow and pillowcase.
- Explain that at your signal, the first person on each team must stuff the pillow into the pillowcase and then pass it to the next kid, who will remove the pillow from the pillowcase and pass both to the next person in line.
- Guide kids to continue stuffing and unstuffing their pillowcase all the way to the end of the line and back again.  
(*Note: If your group is too small to form two teams, keep everyone together and use a timing device to see how quickly they can stuff and unstuff the pillow down the line of kids.*)
- Play as many rounds as time allows.

### What You Say:

“You guys filled and emptied a pillowcase in record time! I bet your parents wish you could make your beds that fast, too. **[Transition] Let’s get ready to hear about something God emptied and never filled again**

## **Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (Small Groups, 25 minutes)**

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

### \* 1. Easter Storytellers

#### **[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]**

*Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment*

**What You Need:** Bibles, prepared plastic eggs (Yarn in the following colors: yellow, white, red dark, gray. Cut a 10-inch length of yarn in each color for each kid and place the yarn strands inside the plastic eggs. If you don’t have yarn, you can cut paper hearts out of colored construction paper to put in eggs.)

### What You Do:

- Give the kids a plastic egg (prepared earlier, containing the pieces of yarn).
- Ask them to take out the strands of yarn and form each piece into the shape of a heart.
- Remind the group that Easter is the story of God’s love for us.
  - He sent Jesus to earth to die on the cross.
  - He took the punishment that all people deserve for our sin.
  - But Jesus didn’t stay dead.
  - He came back to life to show us that He’s stronger than sin or death or evil.
- Review today’s story by asking kids to use the colors of their yarn hearts as clues or reminders of events from the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection.
- Guide the discussion to include the following story connections by asking . . .

- What does a RED HEART remind you of? (*God loved us and sent Jesus to save us; Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood as a sacrifice for our sin.*)
- What does a WHITE HEART remind you of? (*Jesus' body was wrapped in strips of cloth before He was placed in the tomb; Our sin is forgiven and our hearts are made clean when we put our faith in Jesus.*)
- What does a DARK GREY HEART remind you of? (*Jesus was buried in a dark tomb or cave that was sealed tightly with a huge stone; our sin like a dark, dirty stain on our heart keeps us out of heaven unless we ask God to forgive us*)
- What does a YELLOW HEART remind you of? (*an angel appeared at the tomb and told Jesus' friends that He was no longer dead but had risen; darkness and sadness turned to sunshine and joy when Jesus came back to life*)
- When finished, have everyone put the pieces of yarn back inside the egg to take home,
- Challenge the kids to use the “Easter Storyteller” yarns to share the true meaning of Easter with someone today.

### What You Say:

**[Bottom Line]** “Jesus put us first and turned the whole world upside down on Easter. Ever since sin came in the world with Adam and Eve, we have had a huge problem we couldn’t fix on our own. God’s love for us didn’t stop even though we have broken all of His rules. He made a way for our sin to be forgiven. He made a way for us to have a relationship with Him. He sent Jesus. Today we celebrate God’s gift of a Savior.”

**[Make It Personal]** (*Share your faith story with the kids. When did you first hear that Jesus died for you? How did you come to put your faith in Christ?*)

## 2. Fast Pass

### [Live for God | Application Activity]

*Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body*

**What You Need:** Markers, cardboard crosses, Easter baskets with candy

### What You Do:

- Form two even teams and instruct them to stand in rows facing each other.
- Hand a cardboard cross and a marker to the players at the end of each row.
- Explain that when you say, “GO,” the kids holding the cross and marker will pass them to the end of their row.
- The last player will write their name (legibly) on the cross, and then run behind their team’s row to the beginning of the line.
- Repeat the process until everyone is back in their original spot and all kids’ names have been written on the cross.
- The team that finishes first wins.
- Remind kids:
  - When Jesus died on the cross, He died for US by taking the punishment we all deserve.
  - The cross should have had our names on it, instead of His.
  - We celebrate Easter because Jesus took our place and died so that we would be forgiven, but then He rose from the dead to prove that death could not hold Him down.
- Play another round of “Fast Pass,” but this time pass the Easter baskets instead of the crosses.

- Each time the basket makes it to the end of the line, the kid holding it runs the basket back to the start of the line and takes out one piece of candy.
- The team that finishes first wins.
- At the end, let kids eat their candy.

### What You Say:

“When you wrote your name on the cross, it was a reminder that **[Bottom Line] Jesus put us first**. He died in our place taking the punishment we deserve for our sin. But he didn’t stay on the cross or in the tomb. In three days, He came back to life. We do a lot of fun stuff on Easter but the most important thing to remember is that God loved us and sent His Son to save us.”

### 3. Tomb Echo

#### [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

*Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding*

**What You Need:** Bibles, paper tubes

#### What You Do:

- Ask kids to look up Philippians 2:3. Use the navigation tips from Week 1 if they need help finding the verse.
- Say the memory verse together—a few phrases at a time.
- Remind the kids that when Jesus died, His body was placed in tomb or cave.
- Ask if they’ve ever visited a cave. What does their voice sound like in a cave?
- Give each kid a paper tube and let them take turns reciting (or reading) the memory verse by speaking through the tube to sound like they’re in a cave.
- Challenge the group to share ways they can live out Philippians 2:3 by being humble and giving up what they think they deserve today as they celebrate Easter with their family and friends.

### What You Say:

“Jesus was in the tomb for three days, but He didn’t stay there. He came back to life. What do you think the voices of the people sounded like when they came into the tomb and found it EMPTY! (*Pause and let kids take turns demonstrating by speaking into their paper tubes.*) If you had been there, what do you think you would have said? (*Pause as kids once again respond.*) We can echo our praise for Jesus’ power, love, victory, and HUMILITY because we know the whole story. We know that Jesus humbled Himself in order to do something that was absolutely impossible for any of us to do on our own. He endured the cross to pay for our sin and then conquered the grave by coming back to life. He made a way for us to reach God—something we could never do without His help.

“What better way to show our gratitude to the One who rescued us than by following His example! Easter is a perfect day for us to echo our own praises in celebration for all Jesus has done for us. When we do this, we echo His love to others. Let’s echo today’s Bottom Line together. **[Bottom Line] Jesus put us first.**”

## Pray and Dismiss

### [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

*Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application*

**What You Need:** Prepared plastic eggs ([Activity page](#)) in an egg carton or basket

#### What You Do:

- Sit in a circle.
- Direct kids to each take a plastic egg in any color from the basket or carton.
- Explain that each color of egg represents a different type of prayer.
- Tell them to open the egg and take out the card inside.
- Encourage kids to pray out loud, if they're willing. For those who prefer to pray silently, have them indicate they are finished by placing their egg on the floor in front of them.
- When finished, invite kids to trade or choose another egg in a different color and repeat as time allows before closing the group in prayer yourself.

#### What You Say:

"Dear God, we are so grateful that **[Bottom Line] Jesus put us first**. We celebrate Easter because we know that Jesus is alive. Thank you for the gift of a Savior who died in our place so that we could live forever with You in heaven. Amen."