



SESSION THIRTY:

death-to-life

SESSION OVERVIEW

SUPPLIES

- ▶ **Echo the Story DVD/video** for this session
- ▶ **Echo the Story Sketch Journals** for every participant
- ▶ Markers, pens, and colored pencils

① **rewind** THE STORY [10 MINUTES]

The Story So Far video begins with a two-minute interaction for your group. Following this interaction, the video will show a fast-paced, animated review of the previous sessions' stories.

② **prepare** FOR THE STORY [10 MINUTES]

Participants will draw their own version of this session's story symbol in their Sketch Journals. Then, a participant will read a section from the Sketch Journal that helps ready the group for imaginative listening.

③ **imagine** THE STORY [5 MINUTES]

The leader will now tell this session's Bible story. A carefully crafted narrative script of the story is provided in this Leader Guide.

④ **capture** WHAT YOU NOTICE [5 MINUTES]

The leader will ask someone of a different gender to do a second telling of the story. During this telling, participants will use their Sketch Journals to capture aspects of the story that stand out to them.

⑤ **remix** THE STORY * TIME PERMITTING [10 MINUTES]

Participants will be invited to choose from two REMIX activities (included in the Sketch Journal) that guide them to retell part of the Bible story in their own unique way.

⑥ **connect** TO YOUR STORY [20 MINUTES]

Finally, the leader will guide a group dialogue where participants are asked to share their observations and insights from the story. Dialogue questions are provided in this Leader Guide.

THE STORY SO FAR VIDEO

Leader Says:

Right now we're going to continue our journey through the Bible.

We're going to start with a short video. The first two minutes give you a chance to answer a question with a partner.

After the timer finishes, the next part of the video will start right away, reviewing the stories from our last few sessions. So find a partner and get ready, because this video moves really fast. You'll have to pay attention and listen carefully. *Are you ready?*

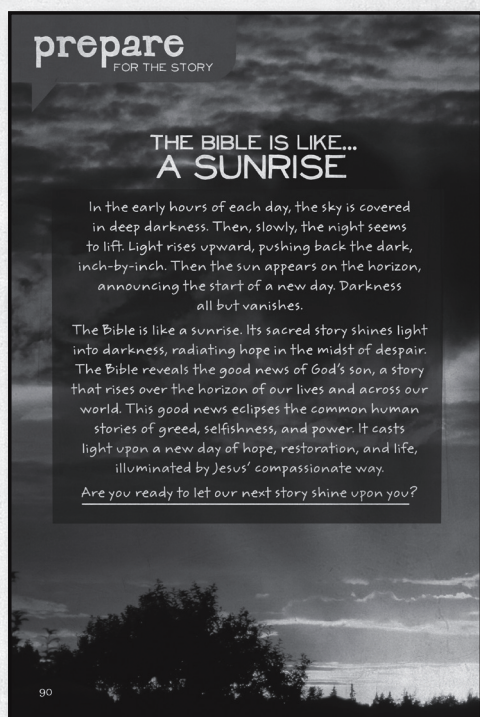
► CUE: Play The Story So Far video for this session.

Even though this is written like a script, please personalize the "Leader Says" parts. You'll be more effective if you're not just reading directly from the page!





Encourage participants to draw their own version of the story symbol, regardless of their artistic ability. The goal is not to create an exact replica but to capture your own interpretation.



prepare FOR THE STORY

DRAW THE STORY SYMBOL

- ▶ CUE: If you collected the Sketch Journals last session, pass them out to each participant. Remember to give Sketch Journals to any new people joining your group. Provide pens, markers, and colored pencils for participants to use.

Leader Says:

Our Sketch Journals are an important part of our Echo experience. They'll give us space to express our creativity, explore our questions, and capture the thoughts and ideas that these stories spark in us.

Each story will have its own **symbol** as a visual reminder of what happens in the story. Right now, turn to **page 88** and *draw your own version* of the symbol for the next story: DEATH-TO-LIFE (cross and sunrise) in your Sketch Journal.

You may be wondering why we are redrawing this symbol when it's printed on the next page. When we each create our *own* version of this story's symbol it helps embed this image in our minds and helps get our **creativity flowing** for the rest of the activities we'll do later.

The goal isn't to copy the symbol—*be creative and make it your own!*

- ▶ CUE: Don't spend a lot of time on this activity—*two minutes or less.*

THE BIBLE IS LIKE . . .

Leader Says:

Each session of Echo will invite us to experience a story from the Bible. But before we dive into each story, we'll slow down and take time to *prepare ourselves*. To help us do this, we'll compare the Bible to a different image or object.

The image for this session is **a sunrise**.

Let's hear more about this from **page 90** of your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ CUE: Ask for a volunteer from your group to read page 90 of their Sketch Journal.

ABOUT THIS STORY [read silently]

Leader Says:

Take a moment **in silence** to look at the **ABOUT THIS STORY** section on **page 91** in your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ **CUE:** After twenty seconds of silent reading, move to the next section. (You don't need to discuss the "Think About" question.)

IMAGINATIVE LISTENING

Leader Says:

Your imagination is able to bring ideas to life in new ways. You have so much potential within you, waiting to be tapped into. As you listen to the next story, unleash your creativity, practicing imaginative listening to connect all of you—your senses and your emotions—with all of the story you are about to hear.

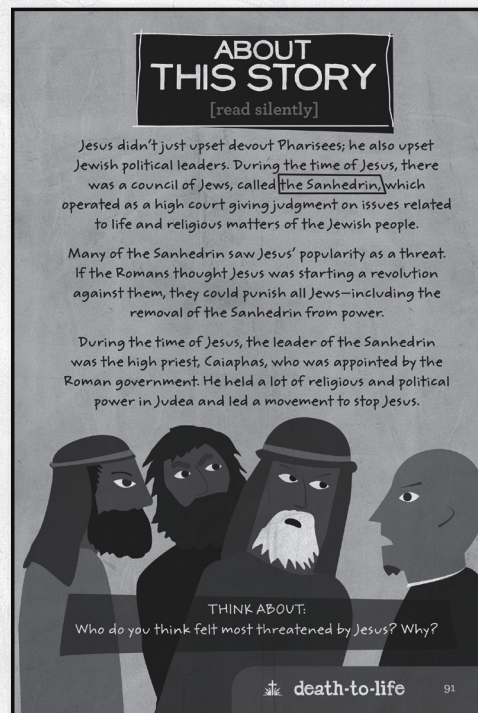
Let's slow down and prepare ourselves for the next story. Push out any distractions and use your imagination to enter the story, seeing it come to life in your mind.

You might want to keep your eyes closed or focus on the image on **pages 92-93**. After we hear the story read once, you'll have a chance to capture what you noticed in your Sketch Journal.

Are you ready?

Take a moment of silence. Sit up straight in your chair. Take a deep breath, slow down, and clear your mind. Whisper a prayer asking God to show you something meaningful from this story.

- ▶ **CUE:** After about fifteen seconds of quiet, begin narrating the story.



imagine THE STORY

Leader Narrates:

Don't just read this story;
bring it to life with
your voice!

SCENE ONE: ARREST

After Jesus and his disciples finished their meal together, they went to an olive grove to pray. Jesus took three of his disciples—Peter, James, and John—away from the others.

In the days leading up to the Passover celebration, some of the Pharisees and Jewish leaders had met at the home of Caiaphas, who was the high priest in Jerusalem, appointed by the Roman government. The leaders had conspired ways they could have Jesus arrested and killed. *“We can’t arrest him during Passover,”* they had agreed, *“or it will create a huge riot.”*

So the Pharisees arranged to have one of Jesus’ disciples, named Judas, betray Jesus in exchange for money.

In the olive grove, Jesus knew that the moment of his capture was near. *“My soul is overwhelmed with grief,”* Jesus told Peter, James, and John. *“Stay here with me and watch over me.”* But his disciples couldn’t stay awake and they fell asleep in the garden.

So Jesus walked a short distance and fell face-down on the ground. He prayed, *“Abba, Father, you can do anything. If there’s another way besides my death, please let that happen—but I will do whatever you ask.”*

Just as he finished praying, Judas arrived with an armed mob. To signal the guards who they should arrest, Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek.

Jesus said, *“Am I a dangerous criminal? Is that why you need weapons to capture me? Why didn’t you arrest me in the Temple where I’ve been teaching every day? You don’t see it now, but this is part of God’s plan.”*

Then the mob arrested Jesus and carried him off . . . and all of the disciples ran away and hid.

SCENE TWO: TRIALS

Soon, the mob brought Jesus to the home of Caiaphas, who was the Jewish high priest. Some religious leaders were already gathered in the house, waiting for Jesus to be brought to them. Two men stood up and said, *“This man said that he was able to destroy the Temple and rebuild it again in three days.”*

The high priest turned to Jesus. *“Are you going to answer these charges?”* he asked. *“What do you have to say for yourself?”*

But Jesus stayed silent.

So the high priest said, *“In the name of God, I demand that you tell us—do you think YOU are the messiah—the Son of God?”*

Finally, Jesus replied, *“Those are your words. But I will tell you that soon you’ll see me in the highest place of power, next to God.”*

The high priest was horrified. He tore his clothing, yelling, *“You heard him—he claims to be next to God. What is your verdict?”*

The people in the house shouted, *“Guilty! He deserves to die!”*

Then they began hitting Jesus and spitting in his face. [pause]

A few hours later, the religious leaders brought Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. In order to have Jesus executed, the religious leaders had to get government approval.

“Are you the king of the Jews?” Pilate asked him.

Jesus responded just as he had to the high priest: *“Those are your words,”* Jesus said.

The religious leaders stirred up the crowds and pressured Pilate to have Jesus put to death. They shouted, *“Crucify him! Crucify him!”*

Pilate could not find fault with Jesus, but a riot was stirring. To keep peace, Pilate handed Jesus over to his soldiers to be crucified. Symbolically, Pilate washed his hands in a bowl of water and said to the crowds, *“I wash my hands of this man’s fate. His blood is on your hands!”*

imagine THE STORY

SCENE THREE: CRUCIFIXION

Jesus was brutally beaten and whipped by the Roman soldiers. They put a crown of sharp thorns on his head and a purple robe around his shoulders. They taunted him by saying, *“Hail, the king of the Jews!”* All night long, the Roman soldiers mocked and beat Jesus.

When morning came, they led Jesus to be crucified at a place called Golgotha (meaning “Skull Hill”). There, the Roman soldiers nailed Jesus’ hands and feet to a wooden cross and planted it in the ground, leaving Jesus hanging on it to die. [pause] Two criminals were also crucified with Jesus—one on his right and one on his left.

Some people passing by the cross mocked Jesus, yelling, *“If you’re really the Son of God, save yourself and come down from the cross!”* Some of the Pharisees and other religious leaders mocked him in the same way.

At noon, darkness filled the skies, blocking the sun for three hours. Then, Jesus yelled out, *“My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”*

Jesus cried out again, and took his last breath.

At that moment, people heard a loud rumble. The earth began to shake and rocks split apart. The thick curtain hanging in the Temple suddenly tore down the middle. The priests in the Temple and people around the cross were terrified! [pause]

Late Friday afternoon, Jesus’ body was taken down from the cross, wrapped in strips of cloth, and placed in a tomb. A large stone was rolled over the entrance to the tomb. Roman guards were posted to make sure nothing happened to Jesus’ body. [LONG pause]

SCENE FOUR: RESURRECTION

Then, early on Sunday morning, some of the women who had followed Jesus went to visit the tomb. Suddenly, there was another earthquake, as an angel of God came from heaven, rolled the stone away from the tomb, and sat on it. His face looked like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow.

The soldiers guarding the tomb were terrified and fainted.

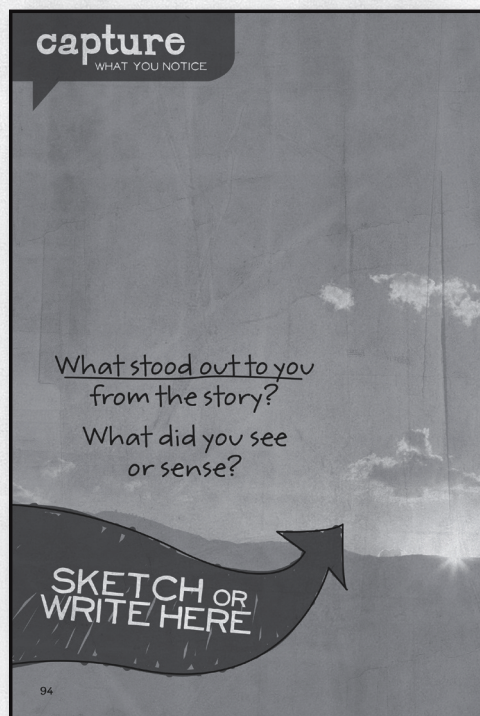
Then the angel spoke to the women: *“Don’t be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus. He’s not here. He’s risen from the dead, just like he said would happen. See for yourself—he is gone from the tomb. Go! Tell his disciples that he’s risen from the dead! You will see him again.”*

The women, afraid and excited, hurried to tell Jesus’ disciples what they’d seen. As they ran, they saw Jesus ahead of them—alive! They ran to him, grabbed his feet and bowed down in front of him.

“Don’t be afraid,” Jesus said. *“Go tell my followers to leave for Galilee. I will meet them there.”*

In the weeks after his resurrection, Jesus met with his followers many times. Everyone who saw him was full of joy—Jesus was really alive!

capture WHAT YOU NOTICE



MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Leader Says:

Take a moment to close your eyes and let the story replay in your mind. Pay attention to what stands out to you from the story.

- ▶ CUE: After fifteen to twenty seconds, transition to the second reading.

SECOND TELLING & CAPTURING

We're going to listen to the story one more time, but this time with **a different voice telling it**. During this telling of the story turn to **pages 94-95** and write or draw the words or images that come to mind. Use these pages to capture anything that you notice—even if it seems like a small detail. You will be surprised—even small things that you notice will spark thoughts and insights from our group.

- ▶ CUE: For this second telling, use a storyteller of a **different gender** from the person who read the first time. *Different voices help people to listen with fresh ears.*

Work at being fully present, attentively listening and making eye contact.

REMIX ACTIVITIES

Leader Says:

Now that we've heard the story twice and begun to capture what we noticed, let's REMIX the story. There are two REMIX activities, designed to help you retell part of the story in your own unique way.

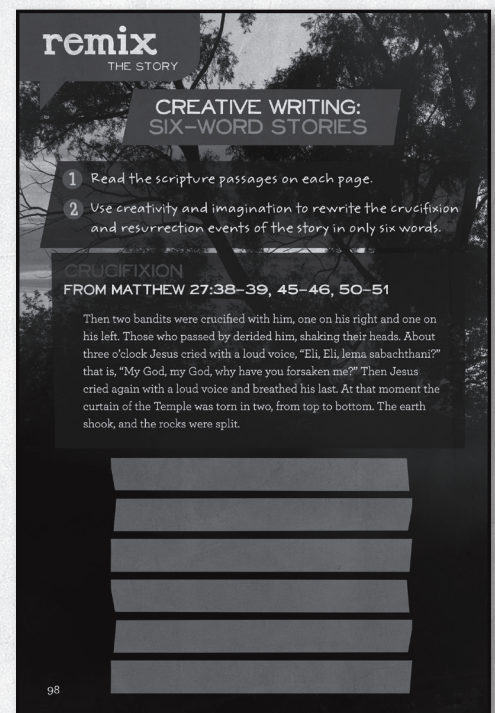
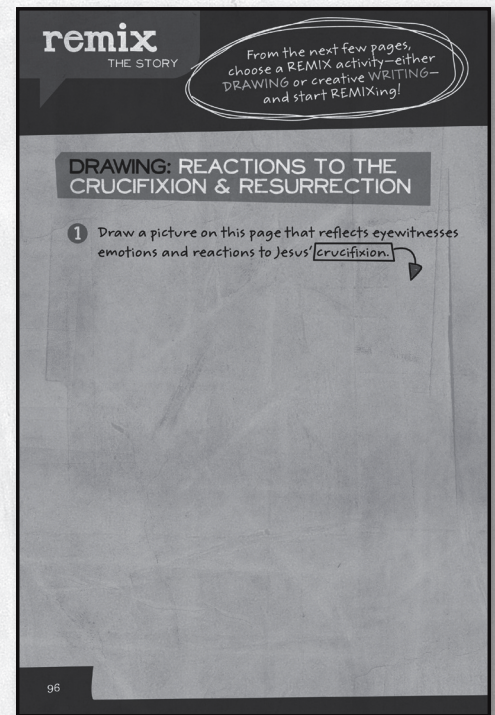
There is a **drawing activity** on **pages 96-97** and a **creative writing activity** on **pages 98-99**

These are *not* fill-in-the-blank activities! These activities are designed to help you express yourself and share what you see in the story.

Or if you'd prefer, you may instead **continue to develop** your thoughts and drawings from the CAPTURE pages you just worked on.

Whatever you choose, take the next ten minutes to **use your imagination** to create your REMIX and then we will share them with each other. Invest yourself honestly in this and you will be surprised at your insight and creativity.

- ▶ **CUE:** After ten minutes (or less if your group finishes sooner), go to the next section.



connect TO YOUR STORY

DIALOGUE PREP

1. There are probably more questions here than you'll have time to ask. Pick a few questions ahead of time that you want to make sure to ask.
2. Questions in gray and marked with a dash are for follow-up. Ask them as time allows and as they are needed.

TURN & SHARE

Leader Says:

Turn to someone near you and share your CAPTURE or REMIX with them. Remember to respect each other's ideas and encourage each other.

- ▶ CUE: After two minutes, begin the dialogue.

GROUP DIALOGUE

Leader Says:

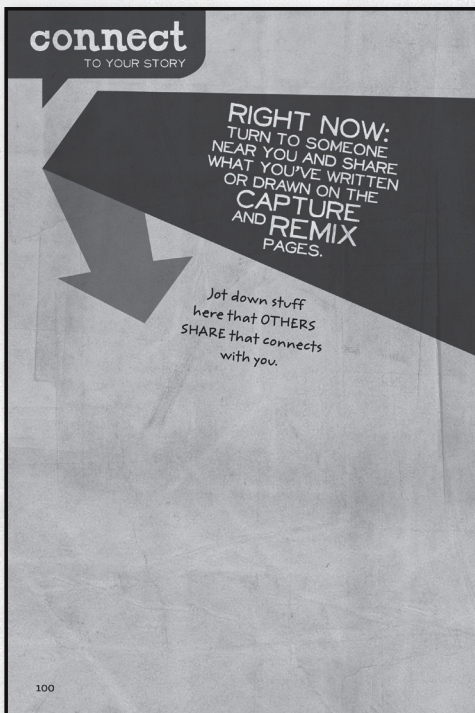
Let's talk more about this Bible story. **I really want to see the story through your eyes.**

Remember, when someone else shares something that you connect with, write it down on **page 100** of your Sketch Journal.

- + So what stood out to you from this story?
- + What did this story make you wonder about?
- + Would anyone like to share more from your CAPTURE or REMIX activities?
- + Take a moment and close your eyes. (Pause, then continue slowly.) Imagine you have a camera and you are watching this story take place right in front of you. Pick a moment in the story to take a picture of. (Pause for ten seconds.) Do you have your picture? Who would like to share what you snapped a picture of?

Leader Says:

I have a few more questions to ask you about the story. Remember, I am not looking for "correct" answers—this time is about you sharing your observations. I want us to see this story through each other's eyes.



- + What did you notice about Jesus from this story (maybe for the first time)?
- + Why do you think Jesus asked Peter, James, and John to stay with him while he prayed?
 - How do you think Jesus felt when he found them asleep?
- + How do you think the disciples felt when they saw Jesus arrested by the armed mob?
 - How do you think they felt when they saw that Judas had led them to Jesus?
- + One of the last things Jesus said from the cross was, *“My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”* Why do you think Jesus said these words? What emotion do they convey?
- + What do you think Jesus’ death shows us about him? What might it show us about God?
- + Why do you think it is important that Jesus rose from the dead?

Bring energy and genuine wonder about the story. Remember, questions and curiosity drive learning.


Leader Says:

Take a moment to think back through all of the stories we have shared about Jesus. Let them play in your mind for a moment. (After a moment, ask:)

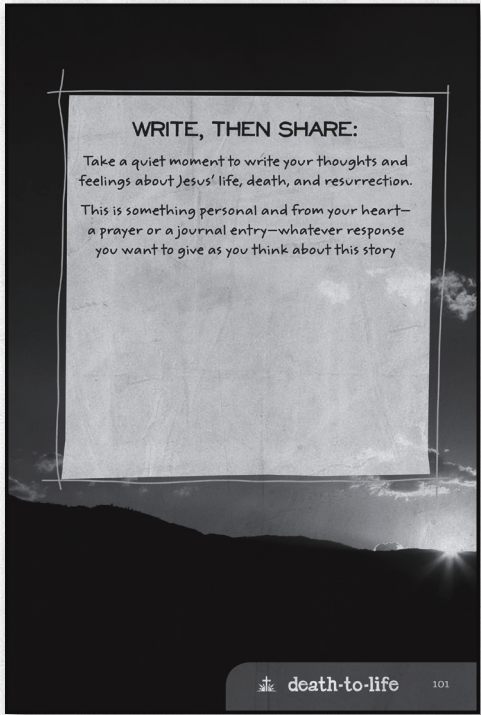
- + How would you describe Jesus’ life? As words come to mind, just share them out loud with the group.

FINAL REFLECTION

Take a quiet moment to write down your thoughts and feelings about Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

You can do this on **page 101** in your Sketch Journal. 

This is something personal and from your heart—a prayer or a journal entry—whatever response you want to give as you think about this story.



connect TO YOUR STORY

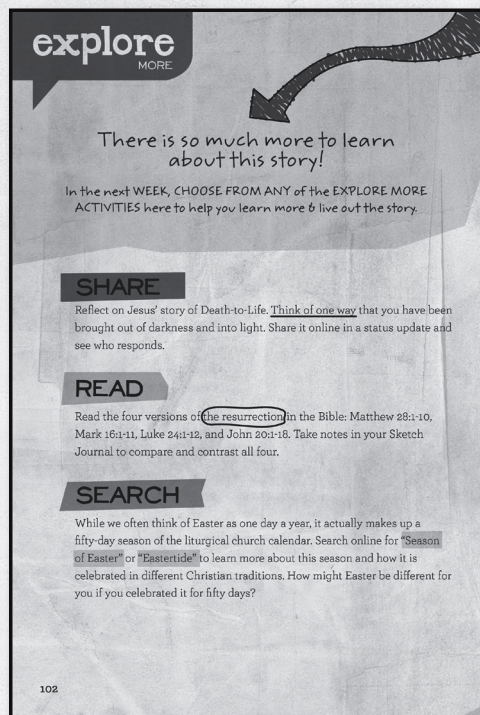
- ▶ **CUE:** After a minute or two of quiet, ask a few participants to share. Encourage participants to personalize their reflections using “I” and “me” instead of “you” and “we” language. This helps participants from being overly general or preachy.

Leader Says:

This was a really meaningful time. *Thank you!* You did a great job.

If you'd like to learn more about this story, there's a section called EXPLORE MORE on **pages 102-103** of your Sketch Journal. Please take your Sketch Journal with you and try some of these activities.

- ▶ **CUE:** To close this session, ask someone to lead the group in prayer.



OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO GO DEEPER:

- + The story of Jesus' death tells us that the thick Temple curtain that separated the rest of the Temple from the Holy of Holies was split down the middle when Jesus died. Why do you think this is significant? What do you think it symbolizes?
- + What do you think the women were feeling as they approached Jesus' tomb on Sunday morning? How did they respond when they saw the stone rolled away and the tomb empty?
- + Did you hear anything that connected with previous stories?