

“Mary Magdalene at the Tomb”

by
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- What** Mary Magdalene reflects on the horrors of Golgotha as she experiences the shock of the empty tomb. Her grief and confusion provide a backdrop for experiencing the wonder and power of the resurrection in “an upside-down world.”
- Themes: Easter, Resurrection, Crucifixion, Cross, Grief, Redemption
- Who** Mary Magdalene
- When** Early Sunday morning on the first Easter
- Wear
(Props)** Dress with swirly skirt or tunic and robe.
Open sepulcher (tomb) in a garden setting.
Container of spices
- If you do not have the ability to create a tomb setting, it can all be implied.
- Why** Matthew 27, 28; Mark 15, 16; Luke 23, 24; John 19, 20
- How** Become Mary Magdalene as she discovers an empty tomb where she watched Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus wrap and bury Jesus after His crucifixion. Use appropriate facial and body gestures to show her grief, confusion, and jubilation.
- Time** Approximately 7-9 minutes

Lights up as Mary Magdalene enters with a container of spices.

Mary: I came to the tomb this morning bearing spices. But I also carried memories...memories of Golgotha.

Places container on rock near tomb.

Golgotha. Where all the ugliness and brutality that ever brewed within the human breast burst forth. Respect, reason, truth, justice, love...all hung suspended on the center cross that day.

I wept until I could weep no more.

Jesus, the kindest Man who ever lived...

Jesus, the One who set me free from demons that tormented me...

Jesus, my Lord and Master...

Had been falsely charged. He'd been smeared and jeered, stripped and whipped.

And then He was nailed to a cross that was jolted into place. How could the One who had given life to so many be dying on a cross as if he were a common criminal? And how could the crowds be cheering about it?

"Father, forgive them..."

Jesus spoke forgiveness in the midst of mayhem. I looked at him in amazement. Surely now the authorities would realize they'd made a mistake.

But no, the horror continued. I implored God to tear open the heavens and rain down judgment or to miraculously lift Christ from the cross.

Instead, darkness devoured the sun.

Lights dim.

It was a deep darkness. A midday darkness. An eerie darkness. A supernatural darkness. A darkness as if all light had been siphoned out of the universe.

The catcalls from the crowd stopped. People started to slink away.

I stayed, mesmerized by the magnitude of what was happening. Surely, we were about to witness a cataclysmic miracle.

Minutes dragged into hours, punctuated only by uneasy onlookers and the agonizing breaths of dying men impaled on crosses.

When I thought I would suffocate from grief, an anguished voice from the center cross cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

I closed my eyes and beat my hands on my chest.

Beats her chest, then raises arms to question God.

How could You abandon Your son in the moment of His greatest need?

Then I heard a deep gasp and looked at the cross. "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit."

Jesus took one last breath. His head slumped. The earth shook. Rocks and tombs split open.

The Roman officer and soldiers were terrified. They exclaimed, "Truly, this was the Son of God!"

I shuddered. Yes. Truly, this was the Son of God. But then...why was this happening?

Lights come up gradually.

One of the soldiers stuck a spear in Jesus' side to be sure he was dead. Blood and water gushed out.

The soldiers pulled him from the cross.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took his body and wrapped it with spices in clean, white linen.

I followed them as they carried his body to this empty, silent sepulcher. I wept with grief so deep I thought my heart would shatter as they rolled a huge stone in front of the entrance.

Then, as Sabbath shadows descended, I trudged home, confused and brokenhearted.

This morning, before dawn, I returned to the tomb, frightened but determined to anoint Jesus' body with spices.

I knew I couldn't roll the stone away. I knew I might be arrested...or killed. I didn't care. Life without Jesus isn't worth living anyway!

When I arrived, I was surprised to find the stone had been rolled away. The tomb was empty! Jesus was gone!

I didn't understand. "Oh, God," I cried. "Who would further defile my lovely Lord by stealing his stone-cold body?"

Distraught, I ran to find John and Peter. I told them that Jesus was gone...that someone had taken His body.

They ran to the tomb to check it out. I followed but stayed outside weeping. They brushed past me as they ran home.

After they left, I looked into the tomb again. There, through my tears, I saw two angels in white, sitting where Jesus' body had been.

"Why are you crying?" they asked.

(Astonished) Why was I crying? Wasn't it obvious?

"They've taken my Lord away... *(Sobs)* and I don't know where to find Him." *(Continues to sob.)*

Someone came up behind me and asked, "Why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, I turned and said, "Oh, sir, if you have taken my Lord away, please tell me where you have put him so I can go and get him."

"Mary," he said. That's all. Just...Mary.

But with that one word, life and hope returned. I knew that voice!

"Rabboni! Master!" I cried as I knelt before Him.

Kneels. Reaches out to embrace him.

I started to hug Him. But He stopped me. "Don't hold onto me, Mary. I must return to my Father. Let go of Me and go tell my disciples that I'm ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God."

I didn't want to leave Jesus, but when He said, "Go!" I went. *(Runs across stage.)* Running!

"Peter, John, Bartholomew, Andrew, Philip...

LISTEN! JESUS IS ALIVE! I saw him! He sent me to tell you he's returning to his Father. That's why the tomb is empty. Jesus isn't there because HE'S ALIVE!"

(Looks at audience and shakes head) Why had we ever doubted? Jesus told us that he had to die but that he would rise again in three days.

(Shakes her head in disbelief and wonder) That's why the chief priests insisted on posting guards at the tomb.

Sometimes I wonder about those of us who call ourselves Jesus' friends. We can be so slow to understand...so slow to recognize who it is who walks among us. We look at the cross...or even the empty tomb...and see an upside-down world.

It is.

But, wonder of all wonders, the cross is where God turns the world...and everyone who trusts in his Son...right side up again.

(Picks up spice container) I leave the Garden with all the spices I brought this morning...as well as with new memories. Memories I'll never forget.

But I leave with so much more! I leave with the risen Christ! And life will never be the same.

Not now. Not for eternity! *(Exits with great joy.)*

Lights down.

Optional festive ending:

Have a soloist or group sing "No Stone" by Steve Amerson or another joyous Easter song. If available, add choreography, signing, or instruments to heighten the celebration.