

Lent is over, and now we are at Easter—a special day when we remember that love is stronger than fear, and life is stronger than death. During Lent, we learned to notice when things feel hard or unfair and to look for ways to share love. Now, Easter shows us that even when everything feels broken, love can still grow. In today's story, we meet Mary. She is sad and afraid, but she doesn't run away. She stays—and that's when something amazing happens.

The first light of morning was just beginning to brighten the sky as Mary Magdalene walked to Jesus' tomb. Her heart was heavy with sadness. After living under the fear and control of the Roman Empire, she had hoped Jesus would bring a new era. All hope seemed lost when people in charge hurt Jesus and nailed him to a cross. When Mary reached the tomb, something didn't look right. The big stone that blocked the entrance had been rolled away. Had someone taken Jesus' body? She ran to get two of Jesus' close friends. Frantically, they ran back to see the empty tomb and the cloth he had been wrapped in. No one understood what had happened. Then, Jesus' friends went home—but Mary stayed.

Mary sat in her sadness, even as she feared the empire had won. She did not hide from her feelings. Then a man asked her why she was weeping. She thought he was the gardener until he called her by name. **"Mary!"** She knew that voice! It was Jesus, her teacher and friend, alive again. Mary was filled with joy and hope. Jesus had come back to life. The pain and sadness hadn't disappeared, but now she knew that love was stronger than death. The empire hadn't won. Just when everything seemed lost, love rose again.

Mary was the first one to see the risen Christ—the first to share the good news that life and love defeated fear and death. Her sadness turned into hope. Seeing Jesus gave her courage. She ran to tell the disciples, ***"I have seen the Lord!"***

Questions

1. What emotions might Mary have felt at the beginning, middle, and end of this story?
2. How does Jesus' resurrection give us hope when we feel sad or powerless?
3. Mary told people that love is stronger than fear. What could you do to help someone feel loved or brave today?

IMAGINE IT. LIVE IT.

These practices—Embodiment, Advocacy, and Joy—are woven throughout these resources, like the Lenten Spiral. Returning to them helps build spiritual habits that ground us, strengthen us, and keep us connected to God’s imaginative work—even when life feels hard.

Embodiment Practice

OUR BODIES ARE PART OF HOW WE LIVE INTO GOD’S IMAGINATION. THESE PRACTICES HELP US SLOW DOWN, LISTEN, AND BE PRESENT TO WHAT WE BELIEVE.

Mary felt many big feelings—sadness, fear, and then joy. Our bodies feel feelings too. Sometimes our muscles get tight when we’re scared or sad. Relaxing our bodies can help us feel calmer and safer. Try this together.

Tighten: For just 3 seconds, squeeze your hands into fists like you’re holding something really important. Slowly count together: 1..., 2..., 3.

Release: Now, open your hands. Take a slow breath. Let your shoulders drop.

Repeat with the body: Scrunch your shoulders up to your ears for 3 seconds. Slowly count together: 1..., 2..., 3. Then, let them fall down.

Notice: How does your body feel when it’s tight? How does it feel when you let go?

When Jesus called Mary’s name, her body could finally relax. Letting go helps us notice when hope and love show up.

Advocacy Practice

WORKING FOR JUSTICE IS PART OF HOW WE LIVE INTO GOD’S IMAGINATION. THESE PRACTICES HELP US NOTICE WHAT’S UNFAIR AND TAKE LOVING ACTION TO HELP MAKE THINGS RIGHT.

Easter reminds us that love can rise even when things feel broken. If your kids are old enough, volunteer at a shelter. Ask: Where can we help? What do others need a break from? As you help, pray for those being served and those who serve daily.

Can’t volunteer? Make care kits with socks or snacks, or draw pictures with messages like “Thinking of you.” As you pack or color, say a prayer together. Even small acts of kindness are part of love’s quiet revolution.

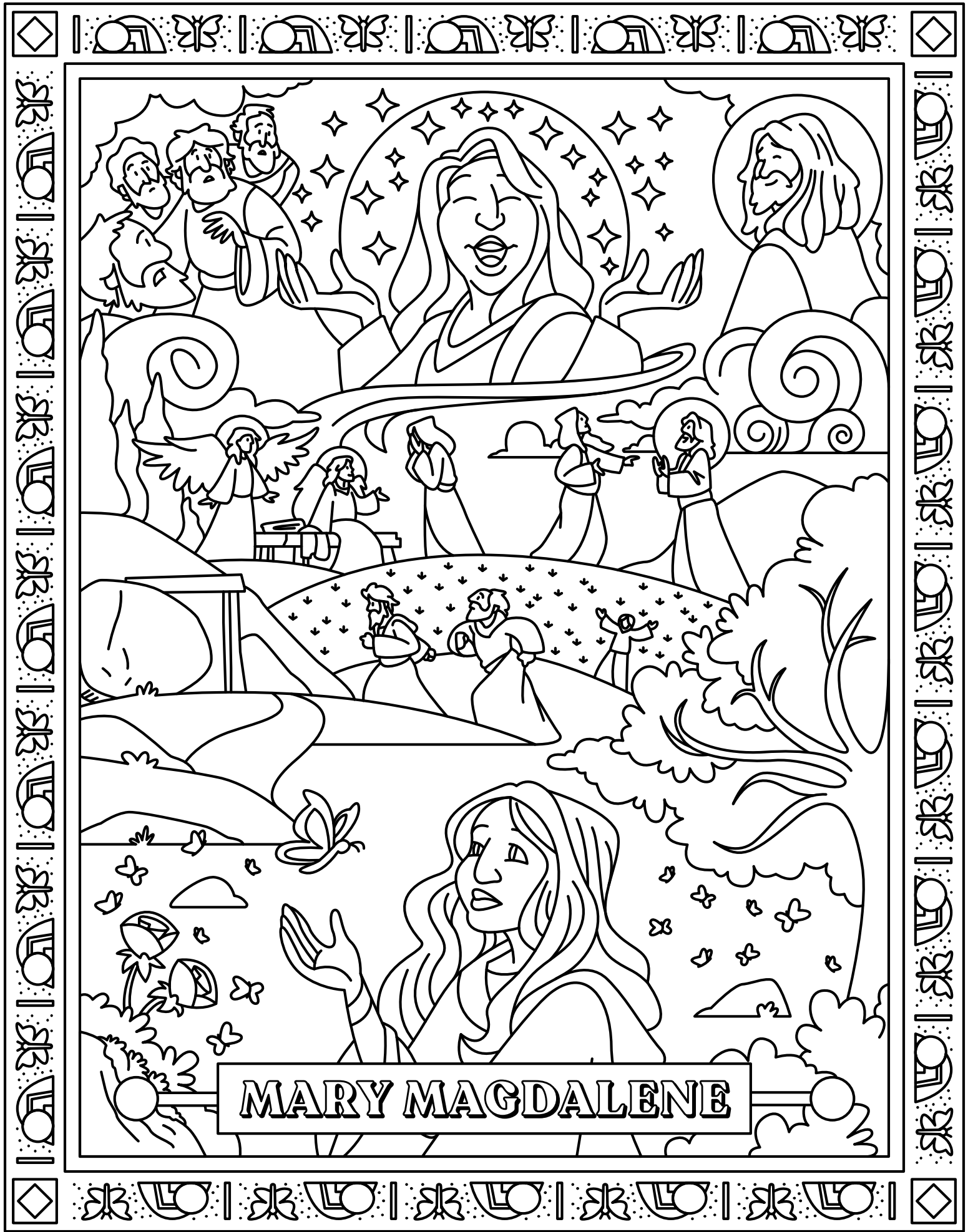
Joy Practice

JOY IS PART OF HOW WE LIVE INTO GOD’S IMAGINATION. THESE PRACTICES HELP US CELEBRATE, CREATE, AND REMEMBER THAT DELIGHT AND HOPE ARE SACRED, TOO.

Joy can be an act of defiance and strength. When Jesus rose, the world had not really changed, but those who knew Jesus did. They found new courage—joy and goodness were still possible! Practice joy together by making the silliest 30-second video you can. Here’s the challenge: choose one random item from your kitchen, and make it the star of your video! Maybe it talks. Maybe it sings. Maybe it becomes a superhero. Get creative, and have fun! After you film, take time to watch the videos together and laugh. And here’s the best part: you’ll have your video saved. So, if there’s a day that feels hard later on, you can watch it again and remember—even when the world feels difficult, joy is still possible.

Prayer

Living God, your love is stronger than any empire. Through you, life is more powerful than death. In you, compassion and love continually rise. Fill us with the courage to be voices of hope in a hurting world. Amen.



MARY MAGDALENE