

Read

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17,
22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or

1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9

LIVING THE WORD

Easter Sunday: The Resurrection of the Lord

April 9, 2023



REFLECTION

How joyful the first proclamation of this good news must have been! The Gospel accounts largely agree that Mary of Magdala was the first to find the tomb empty, and later, the first to see Jesus (for example, read John 20:11-18). She shares this joyful news of Jesus' resurrection with the other disciples. This is why she is often referred to as the "apostle to the apostles." Christ chose to appear first to a woman, someone who couldn't even testify in court under the laws of the time, rather than to one of the twelve.

Why choose Mary of Magdala? We know that Mary was one of Jesus' most devoted followers after he delivered her from "seven demons" (Luke 8:1-3). Mary was also one of a small number who stayed with John and Mary, Jesus' mother, to bear witness to the crucifixion (John 19:25).

Finally, in the early grey of the morning while the world was still asleep, we know that Mary was awake and visiting Christ's tomb. This was devotion! With such great love for her teacher, friend, and Lord, imagine how much greater her joy must have been when she brought the apostles the good news: HE IS RISEN!



ACTION

You have walked through the desert of Lent and accompanied Christ in his passion through Holy Week. This week, your only task is to rejoice! During Easter Time, it is traditional to greet other Christians with the acclamation, "Christ is risen!" and the response, "He is risen indeed!" This paschal greeting invokes the source of all our Christian hope at the high point of the Church year. HE IS RISEN INDEED, ALLELUIA!



Create your own Easter Time playlist with your favorite Easter hymns and songs of praise. Listen throughout the whole fifty days of Easter!



QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Mary of Magdala and Simon Peter are named, yet the other disciple who is part of the story is not named. How can this invite us into this disciple's experience of the resurrection?
- ❖ What would happen if your identity didn't depend on race, preferences, or ability, but rested on being "the one whom Jesus loves"? How might your life change?

Introduction to **EASTER TIME**



The Season

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The season of Easter Time is a fifty-day celebration that Christ has conquered death and reigns with the Father for eternity. Through his passion, death, and resurrection, we are immersed into Christ's paschal mystery. We gaze again upon the face of love poured out, sacrificed for us and for all, the face of God that we see through Christ's life and love. And, we are taught yet again that this loving way is to be our way, the Way.

The Easter Gospel accounts bring us face to face with the mystery of Christ's resurrection, so that we, with the disciples, may move from unbelief to belief, declare our love of Christ, and recommit ourselves to sharing this love in our world.

If we have kept Lent well, Easter Time will help us solidify our commitment to Christ in our daily living. If we slipped during Lent, letting go of resolutions and falling into less-than-Christlike patterns of behavior, this season may be one of new opportunity to live in the hope and joy of the resurrection. Through Christ, we no longer need to despair: we have all we need to overcome the temptations and challenges of life. By the end of the season, we will be reminded that we are promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who will guide us and remind us of all we have learned from our Lord.

There is no doubt that we need Easter's joy, hope, and love. There is much in our lives as individuals and in the world that speaks more of death and darkness than of life and light. It is essential,

then, that we linger in Easter Time, for its full fifty days, and carry it as witnesses into our lives. Christ's risen life has the power to change the world; we must carry this life through our daily living, as Easter people, now and forever.

Celebrating Easter Time with Teens

While Lent has a particular sort of appeal for teens who are developmentally moving from concrete to abstract thinking, Easter Time may be a challenge, particularly for younger teens. The resounding themes of love and the assurance of the Holy Spirit provide the concrete direction needed for younger teens, while the mystery of the resurrection, ascension and descent of the Holy Spirit may be more appealing to older youth. Bring the season to life in your reflections by sharing your own examples of Christian life and love, and invite the teens to do the same for one another.

Preparing the Liturgical Environment

The white of Easter Time is bright after the long Lenten bareness and penitential violet. Add an Easter lily, baptismal candle, and green plants to your environment to reinforce the focus of the season on the newness of life, which we gain through Christ's resurrection. Include a Bible or lectionary, open to the Easter narrative, and a strip of cloth or paper on which is written the word "Alleluia!"



April 9, 2023

EASTER SUNDAY: THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

LECTIONARY #42ABC

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalms 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

Sequence: *Victimae paschali laudes*

John 20:1-9

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

We celebrate the holiest day in our liturgical year, Easter Sunday. We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. To the first disciples, this was a confusing moment. Mary Magdalene arrives at the tomb, only to find the stone removed from the opening of the tomb. She goes out to find Simon Peter and the beloved disciple, and they return with her. They do not yet completely understand what has happened, but they begin to believe. Today we enter into Easter Time, a joyous season that follows the penitential season of Lent. Today, we celebrate Jesus' triumph of the cross and his resurrection, knowing that he has secured resurrection and eternal life for all of us. Celebrate well because we believe!

Q FOCUS: *Jesus has conquered death, and today we celebrate his resurrection.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

The desert experience of Lent gives way to the joyous experience of Easter, fifty days of celebrating the power of Christ over death and the salvation he offers us in his resurrection. Fifty days of joy! Even in this joyous season, we still commemorate those saints who were martyred for their faith, like St. Stanislaus (April 11) and St. Martin I (April 13). The death of saints, especially those killed for their

commitment to Christ, or any loved one for that matter, is a sorrowful event. However, because we are an Easter people, a people whose identity is defined by Christ's death and resurrection, we place our trust and our hope in that resurrection, that the faithful who have died are celebrating with joy in the heavenly kingdom.

Church Teaching Connection

"The Resurrection of Jesus is the fundamental event upon which Christian faith rests (cf. 1 Cor 15:14). It is an astonishing reality, fully grasped in the light of faith, yet historically attested to by those who were privileged to see the Risen Lord. It is a wondrous event which is not only absolutely unique in human history, but which lies *at the very heart of the mystery of time*" (*Dies Domini*, 2).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 20:1-9

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They

have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Today we celebrate the most important holiday in our Church—the resurrection of the Lord, Easter. We hear John's account of the resurrection of Jesus. Even though we know that he is resurrected, this particular account might leave more questions than answers.

► Which person in this resurrection account do you most identify with and why?

If you place yourself at the scene of this Gospel story, how do you think you would feel when you came upon the empty tomb? What would you think? Would you think that Jesus' body had been moved? Or that he was raised from the dead? What would be the most likely answer?

► Is it possible to hear this Gospel with new ears? To be amazed at what took place when we have known about Christ' resurrection for most of our

lives? How might we shift our thinking to be able to do that?

At this point in the Gospel, the disciples have been through an ordeal and are grief-stricken. Mary Magdalene, Simon, and the beloved disciple are mourning the loss of Jesus. They watched him die on the cross just three days prior. Yet, when they arrive at the tomb, they are bewildered at what has happened. Mary had come to the tomb to pay her respects and visit the place where her Lord was buried. Mark's and Luke's accounts of the Gospel note that the women came to the tomb to anoint Jesus (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:55—24:1). In both cases, things were not as expected . . . the tomb is empty! When the other disciples go in, they see the burial cloths are still there but there is no Jesus.

The scene described might remind you of a blockbuster horror or thriller movie. Three friends come upon a questionable situation; no one is sure what is going on. One does not want to enter the tomb, and so she goes to get the others. The second friend does not enter either. The third steps in bravely. In this Gospel, what happens next is not terrifying, but is confusing. The disciples are perplexed that Jesus is not in the tomb. They might have an inkling that something amazing has happened. However, the disciples do not grasp fully what has happened. Even though Jesus had told them that he would rise, the disciples hadn't understood that Jesus' metaphorical teachings on the resurrection were in fact referring to himself.

► Has there ever been a situation that you didn't understand in the moment, but then came to understand later, in hindsight?

We have the advantage of thousands of years of Church teaching to know about what happened on that first Easter morning. We know that Jesus has been raised from the dead. Death does not conquer Jesus. And in this moment, we rejoice in his resurrection. The disciples begin to believe in what they had seen. After watching their teacher and friend hanging on the cross, they begin to recognize that he has conquered death. We rejoice with his disciples today, as we embark on our own journey of resurrection and new life.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 160.

The joy of the resurrection can be new every day, even though we have heard the story many times.

Mary Magdalene and the other disciples come to the empty tomb and do not know what it means.

We can rejoice on this Easter day because we know the truth about the empty tomb!

Act on the Word

Visio Divina: Sacred Seeing

For this activity, you will need five to seven images of the resurrection of Jesus. These images can be found online. You will also need a way to display them to the group. Meditative music will help create an atmosphere of prayer.

Visio divina is a form of contemplative Christian prayer, in which you utilize a sacred image or Scripture based images to help enter into prayer. This "sacred seeing" is an opportunity to allow yourself to be drawn into an image and listen to God's voice speaking to you.

Share this information about *visio divina* with the young people and remind that prayer is an important part of our faith life. It is good to learn about different kinds of prayer so that they can find what is most meaningful and effective for them.

For this activity, you will show each of the artistic representations of the resurrection of Jesus. Allow for reflection time of each image. Show the image for

about three minutes and invite the young people to gaze at the painting or picture during that time, allowing themselves to be drawn into the image.

During that time, you can read today's Gospel passage again, slowly. Or, if you prefer, you can have some meditative music playing in the background to help center the students.

Once you have viewed all of the images, return to the beginning and go through the images one more time. This time, though, invite the teens to share one word or phrase that emerges in their heart while gazing at the picture.

After the second viewing and sharing, invite the teens to break into small groups and discuss their experience of the prayer practice.

Closing Prayer

*On this wondrous day, O God,
you have brought redemption to the
whole world through the resurrection
of your Son.*

*Grant us a new spirit of hope,
a renewed faith in your covenant
and a lively charity in all our works.*

*Through our Lord Jesus Christ,
risen and glorified for ever and ever.*

Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.