

Read



Acts of the Apostles
10:34a, 37-43

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

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

John 20:1-9

LIVING THE WORD

Easter Sunday: The Resurrection of the Lord

April 21, 2019



REFLECTION

Faith and belief are hard to explain to nonbelievers. Often people need tangible proof that something exists or they cannot fully believe. As Christians, our faith guides us even when we don't have physical evidence to show us the way. Peter reminds us in the First Reading of the many examples Jesus demonstrated that he was anointed by God to be our Messiah. Then in John's account of the Gospel, we see Jesus' followers, Mary Magdala, Simon Peter, and the other disciple whom Jesus loved rush to the tomb to find the burial cloths, but no body. They did not fully believe until that moment what Jesus had asked them to believe when he was alive, that he would rise from the dead. Faith and belief sometimes need gentle reminders that, in fact, our faith is Truth.

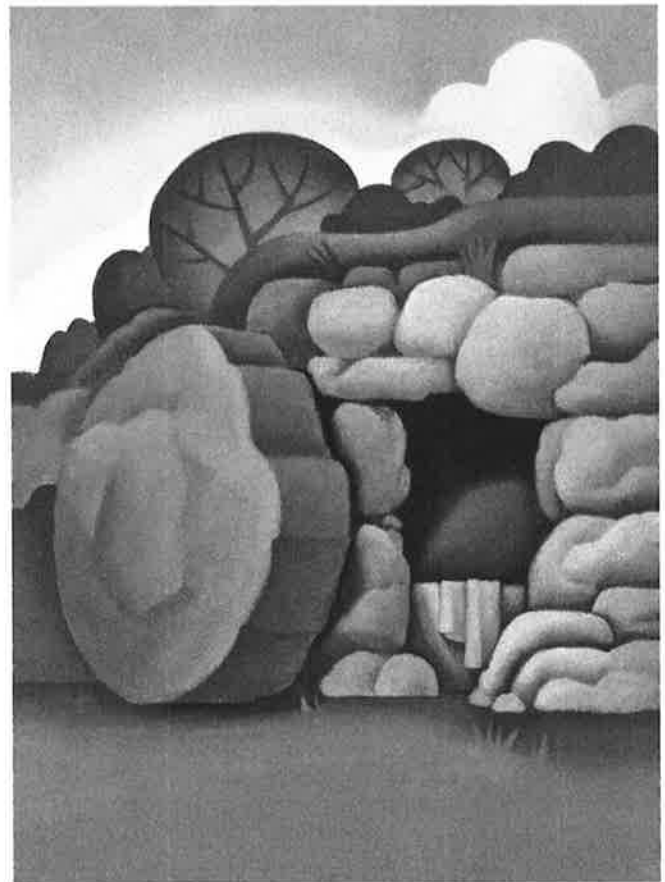
? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Why are people hesitant to believe in Jesus Christ? Are you? Why or why not?
- ❖ What proof helps you to have faith in following Jesus?



ACTION

Take yourself through an exercise in imagination and meditation today. Imagine you are the unnamed disciple in today's Gospel reading. Mary of Magdala comes running to you and Peter to share that the Lord is missing from the tomb. You take off in haste running with Peter. Why did you outrun Peter to the tomb? When you got there, you saw the burial clothes, but did not go in. Why? Eventually, you do enter the tomb, saw, and believed. What was your hesitation?



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. 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-Christ-like patterns of behavior, this season may be a 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 teach 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 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.

Easter Time Environment

The place where you gather with the teens should mirror the liturgical environment in the church worship space. The white of Easter Time is bright after the long Lenten bareness and penitential violet (you may also incorporate gold and silver). 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!"

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.



April 21, 2019

EASTER SUNDAY: THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

LECTIONARY #42C

Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm 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

Today is the celebration of the Resurrection. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Today's readings point to this familiar end to the Good Friday story—Jesus Christ has risen in glory, defeating death! Peter testifies to this in the First Reading, reminding us to live in the reality of the Resurrection, and the Gospel recounts the first moments when John and Peter witnessed the empty tomb themselves. The readings point to the reality of Jesus' defeat of death.

Q FOCUS: *Christ triumphantly conquered death!*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

We begin Easter Time—fifty days of feasting and celebration after having finished the forty days of Lenten fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Easter is too frequently associated with just one Sunday (similar to how people think of Christmas as just one day). However, Easter is a full eight weeks (ten days longer than the Lenten season) precisely so that we have the chance to fully revel in the great mystery and power of the Resurrection.

Church Teaching Connection

"We are aware of darkness and sin, of poverty and pain. But we know Jesus has conquered sin and passed through his own pain to the glory of the Resurrection. And we live in the light of his Paschal Mystery—the mystery of his Death and Resurrection. 'We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!'" (St. John Paul II, Angelus, given November 30, 1986, 3).

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:

► **What do you think of when you hear the word "Resurrection"? What's the first thing that pops into your head?**

Easter is something remarkably familiar to us. We're used to it. It's no surprise that Jesus has risen from the dead. That's the end to the story we have heard our entire lives.

► **But why should we still be surprised by this day? What is it about the Resurrection that is not normal?**

The easy answer is that Jesus was dead, and now he is alive. But if we go further, we realize that he told us what was going to happen all along. For three years, Jesus predicted his death and Resurrection, claiming that the Temple would be destroyed and raised up. In this context, Jesus is referring to himself as the Temple, not the building. Jesus builds a Kingdom that is not limited to the earthly world.

► **If Jesus predicted his own death and Resurrection, then why do you think it was a surprise?**

Today's Gospel recounts Mary of Magdala going to the tomb early in the morning.

► **Why do you think she was headed to the tomb? What do you think she was going to do?**

Mary finds an empty tomb. The stone is rolled away and Jesus' body (which she saw hanging dead upon the Cross just days before) is not there.

► **How do you think you would react if you saw an empty tomb after witnessing someone's brutal, horrific death? Would you be shocked? surprised? scared? nervous? confused?**

► **Mary's immediate reaction is to run to the Apostles. What does she tell them?**

Isn't it interesting that Mary doesn't say, "Jesus has resurrected" or "Jesus is gone"? She says, "They have taken him." Even she is unsure of what has occurred—even though Jesus said it would happen.

► **Has Mary Magdalene truly witnessed the Resurrection? Or was this the work of thieves to continue to torture us for what we profess and believe?**

► **Which two Apostles run to the tomb? Who arrives first? Who goes into the tomb first?**

This sequence of events (running, arrival, waiting, and entrance) are significant because these events show the unique role of the Apostles. Peter, who was charged with keeping the keys to the Kingdom and is "the rock" (Matthew 16:18), arrives after John, the Beloved Disciple. Although he doesn't get to the tomb first, he goes inside the tomb first. John waits for him out of respect and deference to Peter's authority.

► **What do they see when they go inside the empty tomb?**

The burial cloths and head cloth are rolled up in separate piles, cast aside as if the person wearing them was in a rush to leave that place. Both Peter and John see this and believe that Mary is right: Jesus' body has been taken and they don't know where it's been put.

The Gospel ends on a note of uncertainty, almost confusion. Peter and John clearly don't understand what is going on yet . . . they haven't connected the dots just yet. Jesus had predicted this would happen. Jesus had told them exactly what would transpire. And yet, here they stand, confused by burial clothes cast aside and an empty tomb without the body of their friend.

► How do you think you would react?

Mary sees the empty tomb and suspects thieves. Peter and John see the empty tomb and are confused, maybe even a little scared.

► Act as if this is the first time you've ever heard about the Resurrection: What do you think? Is this too unbelievable? Is this too absurd? Is this even possible?

The Resurrection and Easter Time are meant to shock, surprise, amaze, and cause us to stand in wonder and awe at the immense power of God, who can defeat death and rise to 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 180.

Easter Sunday is the beginning of a remarkably important and joyful celebration, one that cannot be downplayed or lessened. This is a time of great rejoicing in the victory of Christ.

We can't forget the significance of the Resurrection despite the fact that we've heard the story and celebrated this victory many times; it should be a renewed joy every time we reflect on the great mystery of Jesus' defeat of death.

Our confidence in Jesus' victory over death allows us to steadfastly understand and believe that life conquers death, the new has come to pass over the old, and that our praise of "Alleluia" is ever-present and important.

Act on the Word

You will need supplies for dying Easter eggs: newspapers, cups, food coloring, vinegar, water, hard boiled eggs, paper towels, plastic spoons, crayons, permanent marker, etc.

Set up egg dying stations with the necessary materials. Give everyone one egg and a crayon. Tell them the meaning and purpose of Easter eggs and the Easter bunny. We talk about a bunny arriving on Easter delivering eggs not just because it's something cute, cuddly, and fluffy to drop off candy and sweet treats. Bunnies symbolize the abundance of life as rabbits tend to procreate at a rapid pace, multiplying in huge numbers. Eggs, on the other hand, are very fragile and delicate, requiring soft, gentle care if they are not hard boiled. Bunnies bring eggs (abundant life delivers something fragile) to symbolize the great fragility and uniqueness of the Resurrection. Jesus Christ delivers something fragile, unique, and precious—new life in him by way of the Resurrection. He is the abundant life giver who gives to us new life, in beautiful and much needed excess. Have the teens use their crayon or permanent marker to write one word that captures the Resurrection for them onto their hard-boiled egg before dying it their favorite color (or colors). They may also draw a design or decorate their egg to express their feelings about the Resurrection. Once they have dyed their egg, have the teens take a close-up picture of their egg and post it to social media with the hashtag #HeisRisen!

Closing Prayer

*Gracious and merciful Father,
on the first day of the week
you raised Christ your Son from the dead.
He conquered the power of death
and opened for us the way to eternal life.
May we be raised up and renewed by the Holy Spirit.
Through Christ our Lord.
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 their family or friends.