

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 or Luke 24:13-35

LIVING THE WORD

Easter Sunday: The Resurrection of the Lord

April 20, 2025



REFLECTION

(Reflection on Luke 24:13-35)

Have you ever watched a film or television series that totally captivated you? When you watched, did you get emotionally invested in the story so that you felt thrilled or scared or excited along with the characters? Have any of those films or series had a disappointing ending?

After the crucifixion, two of Jesus' followers are walking on a road away from the city when they encounter a stranger. They tell this man all that happened to their master, from thrilling beginnings to a disappointing end. In an unexpected turn of events, the stranger ends up being the resurrected Jesus! He explains to them the meaning of their experiences. He helps them see beyond the specific events to recognize the bigger picture: Jesus has come to save!

Our lives might also be filled with seemingly incomprehensible and random events. What we need is a companion, Jesus, to help us understand the deep meaning of our lives. When we live a life of faith, we won't need to watch a movie or a show; we will realize that we are already living the greatest adventure possible, a life with Christ.



ACTION

This week take a walk or series of walks and imagine yourself on the road to Emmaus. Explain to the Lord the events happening in your life, including what thrills you and what disappoints you. Walk in silence for a time and open yourself to hear Jesus tell you the meaning of these events. Be present in your walk to the sights and sounds around you.



Walking while praying helps us become more aware of God's presence in the world around us. Check out the ministry of the St. Kateri Rosary Walk: <https://saintkaterirosarywalk.org/>



QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Where do you recognize Jesus in the events of your own life?
- ❖ How have you experienced the resurrected Christ?

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 "Alleluia!"



April 20, 2025

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 or Luke 24:13-35

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

On this Easter Sunday, we hear the story of the empty tomb proclaimed and celebrate with joy the greatest feast of our Church's liturgical year. We experienced Lent for forty days and now we celebrate Easter for fifty days, culminating in the celebration of Pentecost. The Gloria comes back today into our Masses, and we sing with great joy, "Alleluia"! The empty tomb that Mary Magdalene, Peter, and the Beloved Disciple witnessed is a sign of death defeated, of suffering redeemed, and is a revelation of God's great love for us. God's promise of everlasting life has been revealed to the world.

Q FOCUS: *The empty tomb is a symbol that Jesus has conquered death.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On April 21, we celebrate the life of St. Anselm, an Italian Benedictine monk, theologian, and philosopher (1033-1109). Anselm was known for his theological teachings and for being a persistent and stubborn defender of the faith. After serving as the abbot at the monastery of Bec, he was appointed as archbishop of Canterbury. He was exiled twice over his refusal to allow the kings of England to intervene in matters of the church. He is often referred to as the Father of Scholasticism and was named a Doctor

of the Church for his theological and philosophical writings.

Church Teaching Connection

"The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew. . . . There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter. I realize of course that joy is not expressed the same way at all times in life, especially in moments of great difficulty. Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved" (Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 1 and 6).

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 hear of the empty tomb. Mary Magdalene was the first person to discover that something was amiss at the tomb. She is mentioned by name less than fifteen times in the New Testament, but that is still more than any other woman, apart from Mary, the mother of Jesus. She is portrayed as a loyal disciple, and most references to her are found in the passion and empty tomb narratives. We know that while some of the other disciples fled and abandoned Jesus during his passion, she remained faithful and stayed with Jesus through his death, ministering to him along with other women who were followers of Christ.

► **What do you think Mary Magdalene was feeling as she witnessed her beloved teacher being arrested, tortured, executed, and buried?**

After Jesus' death, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb to care for Jesus' body, according to Jewish tradition. She must have been consumed by grief and loss and felt bewildered by the events of the last few days. Seeing the stone rolled away from the tomb,

Mary must have again been flooded with so many emotions.

► **Again, put yourself in Mary's shoes. What are you feeling in this moment?**

But the story of Easter does not end with an empty tomb. We are not left to wonder, as Peter and the Beloved Disciple did, about what it meant that Jesus was not in the tomb. In the verses following today's reading, Mary stays at the tomb while the other disciples leave. She encounters two angels and then Jesus himself! Mary of Magdala was the first person to witness the resurrected Christ. He commissions her to share the news of his resurrection with the other disciples. This is why St. Thomas Aquinas calls Mary Magdalene the "Apostle to the Apostles."

As we hear the story at the tomb today, we are called to remember Mary's steadfast belief in Jesus. She followed Jesus throughout his ministry, was present at the crucifixion, and witnessed the glory of his resurrection. We, too, are called to live our lives with dedication and devotion to Jesus.

► **Are there any other biblical figures or saints who have been a good example to you of faithful discipleship?**

► **Is there anyone in your life that sets an example for you of deep devotion to Jesus? How does this person do this?**

When Mary, Peter, and the Beloved Disciple saw Jesus' burial clothes, the Gospel today tells us that they believed but they did not understand. Jesus had tried to give them glimpses of what was to come throughout his time on earth with them, but they still did not understand. As we celebrate this Easter, although we know and believe what happened, we still don't understand everything about our faith. Only when we are welcomed into the kingdom of heaven at the end of time will all of our questions be resolved. But for now, we still celebrate with great joy on this Easter day that Jesus is alive and continues to dwell within us!

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.

Mary Magdalene was a devoted disciple of Jesus.

We are called to be devoted disciples of Jesus.

The empty tomb is the sign of Christ’s resurrection and his conquering of death.

Act on the Word

Halleluia Chorus

For this activity, you will need copies of the lyrics of the “Hallelujah” chorus from Handel’s *Messiah* and a recording of the song (there are many options on YouTube) and a way to play it during your session.

Share with the young people the following information. George Frederic Handel was a German composer who created the masterpiece *Messiah* in 1741. *Messiah* is a commentary and reflection on Jesus’ identity as the Messiah. The composition has three parts and uses Scripture texts and prayer texts as its lyrics. The first part considers the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah and the incarnation itself. The second part follows Jesus in his passion. The third part deals with the resurrection and ascension.

One of *Messiah*’s most well-known pieces is the “Hallelujah” chorus, which occurs at the end of Part II. It is often played and sung at this time of year and at Christmas, to describe the joy of Jesus’ incarnation, God-with-us, and Jesus’ triumphant resurrection over death. On Easter, we begin to sing the Gloria and the Alleluia during Mass again to

celebrate the great joy that we have in Jesus. The word *alleluia* has its origins in Hebrew and means “praise God.” Jesus, who is risen, is alive and we sing “Alleluia” to praise him and express our joy.

Pass out copies of the lyrics to the “Hallelujah” chorus. Read over them with the teens and discuss how this song is a song of praise and joy. Discuss what *omnipotent* means (it means all powerful). Play the song. The teens can sing along if they are familiar with it (also, the words are simple and repetitive). Talk about how this song helps the young people feel the joy of Easter. What other songs or hymns capture the joy of this season? If you have time, find and play some of their suggestions. Conclude by reflecting on how they can use these songs to help them keep the celebration of Easter alive in their hearts for the whole fifty days of the season.

Closing Prayer

O God,
who fill us with the joy of the resurrection
and move us to proclaim “Alleluia,”
we join the disciples in their amazement
at the empty tomb.
Grant that we may testify to the
glory of Jesus’ resurrection in all we do.

Who lives and reigns 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.