

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, Mark 16:1-7,
or Luke 24:13-35

LIVING THE WORD

Easter Sunday: The Resurrection of the Lord

April 4, 2021



REFLECTION

The details at the beginning of today's Gospel may seem insignificant, but the image of Mary arriving at the tomb in the dark makes an incredible statement of faith. Even though the world was covered in darkness, Mary still made her way to Christ. The same is true for us today. It is easy to be discouraged by all the darkness that surrounds us. Poverty, war, racism, and other injustices seem so commonplace. Like Mary Magdalene, however, our faith allows us to move forward, sustained by our relationship with Jesus. This is what we celebrate today. Even when it seems like darkness and death have the final word, Christ's Resurrection reminds us that life and love will always win.



ACTION

Easter reminds us of the importance of sharing light in today's world. As you begin this season of Easter, practice affirming yourself and others. Each day, name one gift you see in yourself. This isn't pride, but rather an important form of self-reflection and gratitude. Then name a gift you see in another person, and tell that person how their gift has affected you. Be sure to spend time in prayer, giving thanks to God for all the gifts he has blessed you with.



Share the Good News of
Jesus' Resurrection on your
social media pages!



QUESTIONS

- ✦ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ✦ How did you encounter the Risen Christ today?
- ✦ What are your hopes for this season of Easter?

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-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 everything 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, inviting 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 4, 2021

EASTER SUNDAY: THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

LECTIONARY #42ABC

Acts 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, Mark 16:1-7, or, at an afternoon or evening Mass, 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

Today we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord! Jesus has defeated death and is risen! What an unbelievable statement it is to say that Jesus, who died, has risen from the dead. Yet that is exactly what happened. God remained faithful to his promise and sent Christ for this very purpose; to overcome death so that we might have eternal life through the salvation that he offers us. Today's readings help us to move beyond doubts and fears that keep us from faith, to remember that God is faithful. Alleluia!

Q FOCUS: *God is faithful, Christ is risen!*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

What a joyful season Easter presents to us. Though Lent was a long forty days, Easter Time is even longer—fifty days! Our parishes are decorated in white and gold. We sing joyful songs of praise, celebrating Jesus' Resurrection. We see many flowers symbolizing the newness of life. Baptismal fonts feature prominently in our spaces. We have been given new life through Christ's death and Resurrection. Talk about how you can maintain this joyful attitude for the entire Easter season, which ends with Pentecost.

Church Teaching Connection

"In this gift [of the Eucharist,] Jesus Christ entrusted to his Church the perennial making present of the paschal mystery. With it he brought about a mysterious 'oneness in time' between that Triduum and the passage of the centuries. The thought of this leads us to profound amazement and gratitude. In the paschal event and the Eucharist which makes it present throughout the centuries, there is a truly enormous 'capacity' which embraces all of history as the recipient of the grace of the redemption" (*Ecclesia de eucharistia*, 5).

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:

► **Describe a time in your life when something unbelievable happened.**

Today's Gospel reading is all about the unbelievable. Jesus was dead. His disciples saw him crucified. They wrapped him in cloth, laid him to rest, and rolled a large stone over the entrance of the tomb. Then, a few days later, his body is gone. The stone is rolled away, the cloth is in piles. Where is he? What happened?

► **What do you think Mary Magdalene felt when she saw the opened tomb? What does her response tell us about our own belief?**

Faith is very difficult to understand, as it is belief in what you cannot see. We must trust God, without the benefit of always knowing what will happen next. Mary Magdalene likely felt scared and sad as she frantically searched for Jesus' body. Our emotions can often get the best of us and keep us from trusting God in those moments of doubt and confusion. Perhaps this part of the reason why Mary and the other disciples did not remember all that Jesus had told them about his suffering, death, and Resurrection. Their grief clouded their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. They were still processing what had happened, only days before.

► **Have you ever been worried about something, like an exam, a big game, or a final recital? Did that worry make you doubt your abilities, even though you knew you had prepared for the event?**

Sometimes we lose faith in ourselves or our friends or family. We might not do well on a test or miss the final goal. We might overhear a friend gossiping about us. And yet, we know that we can never lose faith in God because is always faithful. Despite the pain and grief of Jesus' death, God remained faithful. Christ rose from the dead and through his dying and rising, brought salvation and life to the world.

The Resurrection is essential to the Christian faith. Through it, we know that our faith in God is affirmed. It is not misplaced. Even in the darkest "tomb" in our lives, God rolls away the stone and we know that Jesus has triumphed over sin and death. Our lives will not end in death but in new life with Christ in heaven.

► **How can you live in faith during this Easter season?**

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 164.

As unbelievable as it seems, Jesus is truly risen!

God remains faithful, even in the midst of our doubt and confusion.

The Resurrection is the reason for our hope.

Act on the Word

Sharing the Good News

You will need to coordinate with catechists who teach younger grade levels, perhaps first, second, or third grade. Plan a time when the teens can visit these classes as a group and share with them the Good News of Easter.

In today's Gospel, we hear of Mary Magdalene running to share the news of the empty tomb with the other disciples. Although they were confused and unsure of what was happening, we know the truth—Jesus rose from the dead!

This Easter story illustrates an important part of our faith, that we need to share the Good News of Jesus' Resurrection, and the salvation that it means for us, with others. Have the teens break into small group and brainstorm ways to share this message. Let them know that they will be sharing this Gospel passage with young children. How can they help the children understand what Jesus' Resurrection means? After each group has brainstormed a few ideas, come together as a larger group and decide on how your group will present this Gospel passage to the children. Come up with a plan and then share the message!

Closing Prayer

*Risen and victorious Lord,
by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.*

*Easter's light continues to guide the path
of your Church.*

*Keep us faithful to our baptismal calling as
we reveal in our lives that nothing has
power to destroy what the Father's love
seeks to redeem.*

*May our hearts be filled with Easter joy.
You live and reign with the Father in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, 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.